

Challenges Experienced by Young-Mother Learners upon Re-entry to Formal Primary School.

A case in one of the Divisions of
Coastal Region, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Of late, the issue of underage girls becoming mothers has been very high not just in Kenya but in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa. While many of those who become mothers before completing their schooling consider academic qualifications to be very important, they may not be able to cope and succeed academically if the support they need to complete their studies is not forthcoming or is insufficient. Usually instead of getting support, the young-mothers learners endure misunderstanding and pressure from different quarters.

The young-mothers learners may feel disempowered because they are “labeled” and consequently, they develop forms of resistance which in most cases may foster their failure as learners.

The aim of this study was therefore to find out how these young-mothers learners experienced challenges associated with motherhood as learners. The study also looked at some ways that the young-mothers learners used in order to cope with the challenges.

A qualitative research approach was employed to gather information for the study. Four young-mothers learners were interviewed. Additional information was sought from the head teachers/director of the institution these young-mothers learners were schooling or resided through informal talks. This was to gather information about the young-mothers learners’ schooling situation.

It was evident that lack of the much needed financial, emotional and social support was a challenge for the young-mothers learners in their coping with education successfully.

Key Words: Young-mothers learners, motherhood, parenting, challenges, re-entry, support and schooling.

NB The terms adolescent/teenage-mothers and young-mothers will be used interchangeably in this study.

Names of the participants were coded using letters of the alphabet and numerals. For example letters PT were used and numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4. Thus the participants were referred to as PT1, PT2, PT3 and PT4. This is in line with ethics and confidentiality for them to remain anonymous.

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ACRONYMS

CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CREAW	Centre for Rights Education and Awareness
CSA	Centre for the Study for Adolescence
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
EFA	Education for All
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
KDHS	Kenya Demographic and Health Survey
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	Ministry of Education
OVC	Orphaned and Vulnerable Children
SNE	Special Needs Education
UBE	Universal Basic Education
UHDR	Universal Declaration of human Rights
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Funds
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women

DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to my dear and loving husband Peter Karimi Nyaga, who has been my source of inspiration as I struggled with my academic achievements and has stayed with our two lovely daughters during my absence from home.

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1 CHAPTER ONE

1.1 ORIENTATION BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1.1 Introduction

Education plays an important role in the social and economic development of any country. This is more so in enhancing the quality of lives of its citizens. The recognition of the “centrality of education to development and its effects as a multiplier of other rights” (Tomasevski 2003:1) has led to increased international and national interest in achieving global educational goals. This is with a “specific focus to girls ‘education within developing countries as a key pathway to gender equality” (Unterhalter, 2007:39).

This significance is also highlighted in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 2 and 3 as well as the Education for All (EFA) Goals; specifically MDG 3 and EFA Goal 5. These goals recognize educational access as being unequal for boys and girls. Despite the substantial progress made over the post-Dakar period (2000 – 2009), girls remain over-represented among the many children who are out-of school. The 2010 EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) indicates that of an estimated 72 million out-of school children, 54% of them are girls (UNESCO 2010).

However not all girls face the same challenges in educational participation. Pregnant schoolgirls and young-mothers learners in school face unique challenges in ensuring that their new mothering roles and identities do not translate into premature exit from formal education. Evidence from the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS, 2008) point to the fact that early child bearing remains pervasive in developing countries. Early child bearing continues to constrain girls and young women from participating in education (Eloundou-Enyégué, 2004). It is unfortunate that the magnitude and plight of pregnant schoolgirls and young-mothers learners, especially in the developing context, has not been adequately highlighted as a critical issue facing young girls within the education sector.

This research was an attempt to make visible the experiences of young-mothers learners from one rural but cosmopolitan community in Kenya. It was also focused to add to the literature

on challenges faced by young-mothers learners. This is because there is scarcity of literature on the same topic. This study is analysed in relation to an education policy that allows re-entry of young-mothers to school. The study brings to the fore the tensions, experiences and challenges that the young-mothers learners encounter as they try to navigate a rigid school system in an effort to realize their right to education. Some factors like household, school and society; and to some extent religion, traditions and culture were explored as sites where competing interests take place. The study explored how these factors interact to influence the education of young-mothers learners.

The evidence of the study was drawn from individual face-to-face interviews from four young-mothers learners who have returned to formal schooling after child bearing. The study findings were also collaborated from informal talks held with two head teachers where two of the informants have re-entered school; and the director of the “Rescue Village” where the other two informants reside.

Literature on early child bearing refers to the mothers less than twenty years as either teenage mothers or adolescent mothers. This study added the use of the term ‘young-mothers learners’ to refer to the young-mothers under the age of eighteen, who have re-entered school after child birth. The term ‘young-mothers’, teenage mothers or adolescent mothers were also interchangeably used to refer to the same category of learners.

1.1.2 Background

One major social problem confronting many countries in the world is teenage pregnancy and subsequent teenage motherhood or underage motherhood. From the developed countries such as United States of America, to the developing countries, this problem has been a source of worry for most parents, policy makers, social workers and other human service providers due to its negative repercussions on the education of the girl-child (Grunseit, 2007).

In 1997, Grunseit found that the USA had the highest rate of adolescence pregnancy. In addition, he stated that every year more teenage girls became pregnant, many younger than 17 years old.

As in many developing countries, teenage pregnancy and subsequent teenage motherhood is one of the major hindrances to the educational success of young girls in sub-Saharan Africa

(Swainson, Bendera, Gordon and Kadzamire, 1997). A research carried out in South Africa showed that by the age of 18 more than 30% of teenage girls had given birth at least once (Mahy & Gupta, 2002).

Mokgalabone, (1996) maintains that pregnancy is among the most serious causes of school disruption among young girls. This is more so at the secondary school level though undocumented reports show that the trend is extended in primary schools. In most cases, the birth of a child usually marks the end of schooling for young- mothers (Grant & Hallman 2006).

In sub-Saharan Africa, a review by Kenya Bureau of Statistics (2010), the Demographic Health and Survey [DHS] 2008-09 data from 23 sub-Saharan countries showed that pregnancies accounted for an average of 18% of all female dropouts in secondary schools and more than 20% in nine countries (Eloundou-, Enyégue 2004).

According to Kenya Demographic Health Survey [KDHS], (2009), 7 out of 10 girls have had their first sexual intercourse by the age of 18 years, while 18% of teenage girls have experienced a pregnancy by the same age. The high rate of early initiation to sex coupled with inadequate information on reproductive health, favour high rates of teenage pregnancy. This greatly affects girls' education (Lloyd & Mensch, 2005). Studies have also shown that the timing of child bearing directly affects girls' educational outcomes (Ferre, 2009).

Between 10,000 to 13,000 girls drop out of school annually due to pregnancy related causes. However, only a small estimate of 1200 girls returns to school after delivery (CSA, 2008). Research also shows that there are factors that influence whether or not the young- mother learner is able to continue with schooling after birth of the baby. Most of the factors depend on the young-mother learner's ability to cope with the challenges associated with mothering and schooling simultaneously (Kaufman, Wet & Stadler, 2001).

Some girls face difficulties and experience undue pressure from parents/guardians, peers, teachers and even the society at large. On the one hand they receive little or no support from school and home and on the other hand they are usually misunderstood (Arlington Public School, 2004).

Stigma and discrimination by teachers and peers are also reported to be some of the reasons young- mothers learners abandon their education (IPS, 2008: accessed from <http://plan->

international.org/girls/). Emotional and psychological imbalances together with the age of the young-mothers learners can also be added to factors that hinder full participation in educational matters. These factors may also influence their interaction with their babies.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Despite the window of opportunity provided by the re-entry policy on young-mothers learners, a majority of them do not return to mainstream class after child birth in the Division under study, in a Coast County. While teenage motherhood is acknowledged as a global phenomenon whose impact on education is far reaching, the re-entry policy provides the young-mothers learners with an opportunity to complete their education and enjoy its benefit. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, passed in July 1990, affirms in Article 11(6) that state parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that girls who become pregnant before completing their education are able to continue with their education.

However the re-entry policy is in itself not enough and may not protect the young- mothers learners from the challenges related to mothering while schooling. These challenges relate to the well being of the young-mothers learners within the school, at home and within the community. Young-mothers learners who have taken advantage of this policy have had to contend with a “hostile school environment, where they are isolated, humiliated and stigmatized by their fellow pupils; with hardly any effective interventions from the teachers” (Chigona & Chetty, 2007:9, CSA 2008:46-47).

There is a lack of enough information with regard to support given to the young-mothers learners in order to cope with their situation and other opportunities for the young-mothers after child birth in Kenya. Apart from highlighting the challenges and experiences of these young-mothers learners, this study also aimed to make a contribution to the existing literature in education, especially on the effects of gendered social relations at the school, household and community levels on the education of the young-mother learners.

1.3 Research Questions

Evidence shows that 29% of 14-19-year-olds drop who out of school due to pregnancy are able to return to school before the age of 20, but only 34% of these girls proceed and complete secondary education (Grant & Hallman, 2006). I therefore pose questions about the

challenges these young-mothers learners face in their quest for education in primary schools in one of the divisions in Kenya. The underlying premise of the study is that adequate support to the young-mothers learners would enable them to cope and stay in school after re-entry. This would enable them to succeed in their examinations and probably proceed to secondary schools and even to the universities.

Such an argument challenged the construction of, on the one hand, young-mothers learners as recipients of the concerted support and, on the other hand homes and public schools as environments which should provide uncontested support to the girls. Therefore I posed the following question and sub-questions:

1. What challenges do young-mothers learners experience when they re-enter formal schooling in primary school?

- (a). How do these challenges come about?
- (b) Is there any support accorded to these young-mothers learners as they struggle to balance motherhood and learning?
- (c) How do the young-mothers learners cope with these challenges?

1.4 Aim and rationale of the study

This study was motivated by the fact that young-mothers learners are in a crucial phase of their lives. They are experiencing the integration of “earlier identification, abilities and opportunities offered by society” (Gouws & Kruger, 1994:83). This means that these girls are at a time of heightened psychological risk (Brown & Gillgan, 1992), whereby the individuals are being emotional and intuitive and needing approval. In addition to the motivation, young-mothers learners and their children are two particularly vulnerable groups in society; their long-term life chances are interconnected. They are both at critical points of their lives, where their life courses may be shaped towards stability and productivity or towards poverty and dependency (Chevalier & Viitanen 2001; Stephens, Wolf & Batten, 1999).

Teenage child bearing is often associated with numerous disruptions for girls when it comes to school attendance (Theron & Dunn, 2006). The young-mothers learners are left to untangle the disruptions sometimes on their own. Denying them the supports they need to pursue their

education condemn them and their babies to a vicious cycle of poverty and ignorance (Kunio & Sono, 1996). If the society expects the girls to succeed with schooling, provision must be made for meeting the special educational needs of these learners. From this stand point, I embarked on this study, examining the challenges which schooling young-mothers learners experienced.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

In an effort to understand the issues raised and find answers to the research question, the study employed the work of Pillow (2004), Mac an Ghaill's (1988) study of the "black sisters", and Foucault's (1978) "notion of power and discourse".

Pillow (2004) offers an insight into how educational policy is affected by beliefs, values, and attitudes situated in discourses, which in turn impact on school's responses which could create or limit the educational options of learners. This work also enlightened me on how discourses about teen pregnancy/motherhood are constructed, how these discourses work, and what educational opportunities the discourses may suppress or open up for the schooling young-mothers learners.

Mac an Ghaill's, (1988) study offers insight into the concerns around schooling of young women. His work shows how the young women face schooling challenges due to social division which include class, gender, status and culture. Mac an Ghaill's work foregrounds how to focus on young women's strategies of institutional survival that develop in response to the social division that pervades their schooling and their social lives (Mac an Ghaill, 1988). His work provides an appropriate design which can be used to a great advantage when studying the challenges faced by girls.

Foucault's (1978) notion of power and discourse also provided an insight on understanding the marginalization of the young-mothers learners at school. The girls are usually marginalized due to discourses about teen pregnancy/motherhood which have developed in societies. According to Foucault (1989), power shapes the subject; but power is also what subordinates the subject. The shaping and subordination processes occur simultaneously. Foucault argues that subject shaping and subjection takes place in and through discourses. Luttrell, (2003) argues that discourses rest on, and are responses to, power relations. The discourses work to ensure, regulate and control that which the institutions like schools want to

contain. For example schools could marginalize young-mothers learners in order to deter the behaviour of getting pregnant before completing school.

The study also sought guidance from the theory of social exclusion that postulates that heterogeneity in the society is rooted in and perpetuated by factors that influence access to economic, political and cultural assets (Figueroa, 1999). The theory attempts to explain inequalities in the capitalistic economic environments. According to Room (1995), social exclusion denies citizens civil, political and social rights to participate like other members of the society. This study views teenage pregnancy and subsequent teenage motherhood as a precipitating factor to social exclusion faced by young-mothers learners in school. The theory further posits that social exclusion and deprivation are cyclic in nature. Socioeconomic disadvantage is recognized both as a cause and a consequence of teenage parenthood. The offspring of young- mothers are likely to face the same alienating factors and live in poverty, get affected by early pregnancy, experience early exit from school and subsequently face unemployment (Botting, Rosato & Wood, 1998).

2 CHAPTER TWO

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The World Declaration on EFA at the Jomtien conference in 1990 noted the high incidences of girls amongst the children out of school and outlined some of the signals that the education of girls was important for a global social justice project (UNICEF, 2001). Undertaking this commitment will assist other states to recognize Kenya as a responsible member of the International Community (Wekesa, 2014). The Centre for Rights to Education and Awareness [CREAW], (2007) indicates that education is an important pillar that determines one's health and legal status.

Maluwa-Banda (2004) argues that education is an investment that serves as a way to achieve education for all children. He argues that it has been highly accepted as being a powerful tool. It is a tool for self advancement and fulfilment of development outcomes for present and future generations of children. Education also offers young women opportunities to get employment and increase their economic standing. Macmillan, (2011) adds that education lays a foundation of knowledge and skills to pursue higher levels of education, earn a living, attain technological advancement and compete effectively in a country's economy. Njeru, (2004) also adds that educational attainment is a prerequisite for upward social mobility.

According to Fancy, (2012) a truncated education has negative repercussions on the future of young-mothers, in terms of employment opportunities and their general well-being. It is also argued that allowing pregnant teenagers to remain in school and return after giving birth is considered significant in delaying a second birth. Negative educational outcomes lead inevitably to negative economic impacts for the young-mothers, their children and society as a whole United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA], (2013c). The attainment of Universal Basic Education [UBE] is one of the MDGs as mentioned earlier. Kenya is one of the 189 countries which in the year 2000 committed themselves to the attainment of the MDGs by 2015 (Wesanyu, 2008). To this end, Kenya has made great strides especially in the field of education. According to UNESCO (2012) report, Kenya's school enrolment from class one to class eight was approaching 100%.

Never the less, these efforts are being thwarted by a number of factors in sub Saharan Africa, Kenya included. One of these factors is teenage motherhood amongst others such as poverty and lack of sex education (Obanya, 2009). According to Eloundou-Enyégué, (2004) teenage motherhood in developing countries continues constrain girls from participating in education. For example, developing countries account for 95 per cent of births to adolescent mothers. In these countries 2 million girls give birth before reaching the age of 15 (UNFPA, 2013c).

In Kenya, giving birth during adolescence is a growing phenomenon which is depriving young girls a chance to shape their destiny positively. This should be of great concern to everyone. A report by the United Nations and Development Programmes (UNDP, 2010) indicates that child motherhood is a situation in which a girl in her teen years becomes a mother as a result of getting pregnant (Brady, Stephanie & Ventura, 2012). This can be through rape, lack of information about sex and sexual intercourse and its consequences, early marriages, forced child prostitution, transactional sexual relationships, adolescents' need to experience their sexuality etc., without necessarily knowing how one can become pregnant. This clearly shows that most of the adolescents' pregnancies are never intended. As Miller, Decker, Reed, Raj, Hathaway and Silverman, (2007) put it, unintended pregnancies are two or three times more likely to be associated with abuse.

According to Ioannide-Kapolou, (2004) lack of adequate information on sex is one of the reasons for the increasing number of unwanted pregnancies among the teenage girls. On the other hand, this lack of awareness can also be explained in the context of African culture which tends not to encourage debate on matters related to sex and sexuality between parents and their children. According to Maluleke, (2003b), African culture assigns such responsibility of addressing sex and sexual matters to initiation schools.

Initiation is a rite of passage marking entrance or acceptance into a group or society. One type of initiation rite is the puberty rite. This rite is about collective rituals whose function is to effect the transition from childhood to adolescence or from adolescence to adulthood.

Initiation schools are supposed to educate both boys and girls about their biological changes, social morals, relationships, self-control and their changing roles as young men and women. For example, a sexual education programme in South Africa called "Vukhomba" is intended to address topics such as maintenance of virginity, self-control and social morals (Maluleke 2003b). In Kenya, different tribes had their different ways of performing such rites. However,

of late these programmes are being done mostly by different churches (Ginsberg, Kariuki & Kimamo, 2014).

Young girls experiment with sex as they enter adolescence. Adolescence is a stage where teenagers adjust to in their physical and emotional changes in life (Lerner & Steinberg, 2004). It is also a stage where early adolescence represents a period of sexual maturation. At this stage, most teenagers ignore the counsel of their parents and choose to go with what their peers than with their parents (Lerner & Steinberg above).

On the other hand, some young girls engage in transactional sexual relationships due to the economic status of their families (poverty). Transactional sex is when money or gifts are exchanged for sexual relationships. These kind of sexual relationships do not necessarily involve a predetermined payment or gift (Hunter, 2013). He also argues that transactional sex occurs where there is a definite motivation to benefit materially from the sexual exchange. Transactional sexual relationships also tend to be longer and are more often intergenerational (i.e. between an older and younger person). According to Hoefinger, (2013), the participants of transactional sexual relationships do not frame themselves as prostitutes but as girlfriends/boyfriends.

Transactional sexual relationships are particularly common in sub-Saharan Africa where they often involve relationships between older men and younger women or girls (Cole, 2010). Though some researchers have shown that transactional sex is not necessarily driven by poverty, a general consensus among those studying transactional sex is that it is associated with the onslaught of poverty (Groes-Green 2013).

Cases of sexual violence are not isolated to Kenya alone rather they are a worldwide problem that must be addressed and fought by all right thinking human beings. A UNFPA, (2012b) report indicates that between 15 per cent and 45 per cent of young women in Latin America and the Caribbean respectively have had their first sexual experiences through coercion and without using a condom. Cases of forced sex were also common in the Asian Pacific region where the likelihood of being a victim of forced sex was found to be higher for girls experiencing sex for the first time at a younger age than those who experience it at a later age (UNFPA, 2013b). United Nations Development Fund for Women [UNIFEM], (2010) also reported that worldwide, 50 per cent of sexual assaults are committed against girls less than

16 years. (Erulker 2013) argues that many of the adolescent girls' first sexual encounters are non-consensual in some countries.

According to UNDP (2010) report, a study carried in Kenya by the CSA in 2008 found that approximately 13,000 girls leave school every year due to teenage pregnancy. These girls who are in their teenage years are usually in primary and /or secondary schools. Kaufman et al (2000) argue that both pregnancy and parenting are the leading reasons girls give for dropping out of school. Adolescent motherhood is also disruptive to the educational process of girls and as a consequence, many girls leave school never to return (Theron & Dunn, 2006). As such, the girls undergo a lot of crisis as they try to come to terms with their situation as young-mothers. Caplan's (1964) crisis theory maintains that a crisis occurs when the individual encounters what is perceived as threatening and challenging to the individuals manner of coping.

The Kenya Re-entry policy is clear that young girls who give birth should be allowed back to school if they seek re-admission. However, those who opt to re-enter schooling face a number of challenges mainly due to lack of support, stigma, social exclusion, poverty related issues, peer pressure and misunderstanding.

Lack of support from teachers, parents and the community often hinders the young-mothers learners from continuing with their education successfully (Olunike, 2012; GOK 2009). Some communities regard teenage pregnancy as a shameful event for the families of the teenage mothers (Mpetshwa, 2000). The most pressing problems are lack of individual and institutional support. These include but not limited to educational, social, cultural and financial support (Dlamini, 2002). Breheny & Stephens, (2007) say that motherhood is a challenge requiring support and community involvement regardless of the mother's age and social economic position. The young-mothers who re-enter school need support to manage their double responsibilities as mothers and as learners (Maluli & Bali, 2014). They also need counselling upon re-entry to formal schooling (Omwancha, 2012).

However, parental and peer pressure are far more common than support and understanding (Arlington public school (2004). It is also argued that mature and adult decisions are required by these young-mothers learners. This would enable the pressured young-mothers learners to be emotionally stable. Managing to care for the infant and devoting time to school work are great challenges for them. The young-mothers learners are often expected to be learners and

mothers simultaneously which is a big responsibility for a teenager who is still developing psychologically (Theron and Dunn, 2006).

In Kenya, some school heads fear allowing the young-mothers to return to school because of the stigma and labelling associated with having mothers in a learning environment (Omondi, 2008). Omondi, (2008) also observed that the schools that enrolled back young-mothers as learners in to their institutions were often abusively referred to as maternity schools. This is despite the fact that there is an Education Policy on re-entry of girls who have given birth. This not only humiliates the young-mothers as learners but also openly encourages isolation of such girls in social gatherings (Omondi, 2008).

Chigona& Chetty, (2007) reported that hurtful comments may lead the young-mothers as learners to feel isolated and not supported. The insensitive labelling of the young-mothers learners sends negative messages to the young-mothers' self-esteem (Chevalier & Viitanen, 2003). According to the study, few schools have re-admitted young-mothers back to school.

Morell, Bhana & Sheffer, (2012) argue that school support is a crucial factor in determining whether a teenage mother is able to continue her education. This is further supported by Kiptanui, Kindiki & Lelan, (2015) who argue that the willingness of the school administration to accommodate and support young-mothers learners is a primary consideration for support. Smith-Battle, (2013) argues that there is lack of consistent support for teenage mothers from their families too.

Stigmatization and discrimination are some more of the challenges that these young-mothers learners encounter as they struggle to balance their roles as mothers as well as learners. The demanding roles of motherhood and the social ridicule these young-mothers learners get from the society often make them traumatized. The ridicule may be from teachers, parents, fellow classmates and the society (Oyaro, 2008). This negative treatment leaves the young-mothers in school with emotional scars and most importantly a bleak future to face.

Young-mothers do not have the emotional and intellectual maturity that is needed to provide for another life, (Brady et. al., 2012). Studies indicate that once young girls become pregnant, they undergo emotional upsets as they are young, vulnerable and may not know what to do. Such emotional upsets can be termed as a crisis (Caplan, 1964). This therefore poses a danger to both the teen-mothers and their children and the young-mothers may not know how to cope

with it. Early motherhood is also likely to affect the psychosocial development of their infant too.

Once young school girls discover that they are pregnant, they fear what will become of their life and schooling. Parekh & La Ray, (1997) argue that teenage mothers react with fear and denial once they realize they are pregnant. They see pregnancy as a disruption in their lives and they may fail to continue with schooling (UNESCO, 2012). Parents too react towards the news of their daughters being pregnant with anger. In some cases, the anger would lead to male parent threatening to chase the young-mother out of the household (Atuyambe, Mirembe, Tumwesigye, Annika, Karumira & Faxelid, 2008).

Stigma and discrimination against pregnant and adolescent mothers are common things in the society. This is not only because of their sexual activity, but also due to school staff and peer attitude toward young-mothers in school (Smith-Battle, 2013; Van den Berg & Mamhute, 2013). This in return makes the young-mothers learners to feel unwanted, unwelcome and unaccepted.

Religions also stigmatize young-mothers within their flock. They view young-mothers who are unwed as being sexually active against the teachings of the religions they follow (Ahleberge, 2009). Young-mothers may also feel that they are socially excluded because they are pregnant at their age (Onyeka, Mietolla, Ilika & Vaskilampi, 2011). Actually, in many cultures and religion, girls were supposed to get married once they discovered they were pregnant (Byaona & Kandji, 1996).

Close family members are also not left out in the stigmatization of young-mothers. The family members may discriminate against the young-mothers among other siblings as a way of punishing them for their mistake (Twenge, 2002).

Teachers are usually seen as people who are supposed to support and motivate girls including young-mothers to stay in school. However, Runhare & Vandeyar, (2012) argue that the stigma and discrimination by teachers is different and often more complex. They contribute to the stereotype of describing the young-mothers learners in their schools as lazy, distracted, low-performing and also at risk of “contaminating” their fellow female learners with their “bad behaviour”.

Stigmatization is also blamed on the media as they do not highlight the complex and troubling truths of teenage motherhood and what they go through on a daily basis (Luckier, 2010; Thembi, 2012). Studies carried out in the United States of America and the United Kingdom indicates many teenage mothers reported to have felt strongly stigmatized by the media. Media is blamed for presenting the young-mothers as lacking in ambitions in terms of their careers on one hand (Yardly, 2008; Njeru, 2004 and Smith-Battle, 2013), and portraying them as good mothers who can be looked at as role models who are able to exercise control despite their mistake (Shaw,2010).

Another challenge that can be said to be affecting the successful academic achievement of young-mothers learners is the need to balance their roles as learners, daughters, and as young-mothers. Nyambura, (2000) states that women's life do not fall systematically as girl, sister and then mother but may overlap and co-exist through her life. As learners, they are expected to follow the rigid school rules and behave like any other learner in the school. As daughters and sisters in the family, they are expected to help in the housework since this prepares them for their future roles as wives. As young-mothers, they are expected to care for their babies as would an adult mother.

Breheny & Stephens, (2007) argue that motherhood is a challenge requiring support and community involvement regardless of the mother's age and social economic position. They further propose that different social structures could be used to support motherhood occurring at any point in the life course so that motherhood could be successfully combined with education and employment in any order.

In addition to that Pearton, (1999) also argues that adolescents are mostly too young and emotionally immature when they first get pregnant, hence if these girls are to succeed academically, it is important to provide support.

According to Nystrom & Ohrling, (2004) caring for new-borns is a challenging responsibility faced by many young and adolescent mothers. A study in Swaziland reported similar challenges experienced by adolescent mothers (Kaufman, et al, 2000). Similar findings have been reported in South Africa (Dlamini, 2002). Logdson & Koniak-Griffin, (2005) argue that post-partum adolescents have increased needs for emotional, material and informational support. Sometimes, in order to cope with challenges of motherhood, some teenage-mothers (including young-mothers in school) who experience difficulty with nurturing role of

motherhood may depend highly on an older parent or caregiver to guide them in parenting (Paschal, Lewis-Moss, and Hsiao, 2011).

In order to cope with the many challenges, associated with motherhood and learning at the same time, some young-mothers learner device their own coping strategies. For those who cannot handle the stigma, ridicule and prejudice from the school community, they leave school altogether never to return. However, those who opt to continue with education may seek temporary measures that enable them to cope. Such measures include hiding their pregnancy or skipping school for some times and then re-engaging again. Kaufman, et al (2000) asserts that both pregnancy and parenting are the leading reasons girls give for dropping out of school while Theron & Dunn (2006) argue that adolescent child bearing is especially disruptive to the educational process of girls and as a consequence, many young teenage mothers leave school never to return.

2.2 Young student-mothers as learners with special educational needs

Situation concerning young-mothers learners as well as teenage pregnancy and schooling problems is not only accounted for in Africa. It is widely accounted for globally (Van Vuuren, 1990; De Villiers, 1991; Chevalier & Viitanen, 2001; Pillow, 2004). A few authors have written on girls and the attainment of education on the African continent. For example, Leo-Rhynie (1999) wrote about tools and sector-specific guidelines for mainstreaming of girls' education. Thody kaabwe, (2000) highlighted the critical role of education for girls in Africa, while Eloundou- Enyégué (2004) focused on pregnancy related dropouts and inequality in attainment of education by girls in Cameroon.

Mokgalabone, (1999) and Grant & Hallman, (2006) showed that situations relating to pregnancies and schooling disturbances are inevitably associated with societal problems. The problems range from ignorance and moral collapse (Helge, 1989), to the sexual abuses of powerless female adolescents (McGurk, 1993).

Pillow, (2004) found that many teen mothers return to school because of their babies. They are determined to complete schooling for the sake of their babies. However, the girls' difficulties in coping with schooling are attributable to their babies. It is also a fact that educators and parents often give up on them and fail to take their plans seriously once the

girls had children (Schultz, 2001). Research by the US Department of Education, (1992) showed that both pregnancy and parenting were the leading reasons girls give for dropping out of school.

Continuing with schooling for these young-mothers learners may sometimes prove to be a heavy burden, more so for those living in unstable home environments. It has been argued that teen parents often face many challenges. Parental and peer pressures are far more common than support and understanding.

More pressing for these young girls are the discourses that have been developed surrounding teen mothering and the effect that have on their educational experiences for example, the discourse of education as a responsibility (Pillow, 2004). He argues that the discourse is based on the argument that obtaining education is no longer a right to young-mothers. Rather it is something that the girls owe to the society if they are not to be dependent on welfare support and a burden to the taxpayers (Pillow, 2004). McDowell (2003) argues that teen mothers are generally less educated and tend to have bigger families. They tend to have higher levels of extra-marital and unwanted births than educated teenage girls. In many situations, they are subjected to greater risks of socio-economic disadvantages throughout their lives than those who delay child bearing until their twenties. Chevalier & Viitanen, (2001) also argue that the negative impact of teenage motherhood on various adult roles as mothers is not due to some pre-motherhood characteristics; hence policies aiming to encourage a return to school and participation in the labour market may be an efficient way to reduce the long-term consequences of teenage pregnancy.

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Kenya, education is stipulated as a Right of every child. Kenya recognizes a child as any individual under the age of 18 years. The Universal Declaration of human Rights [UDHR] Article 26 also recognizes education as a basic human right. Regional charters like the African Charter on Human Rights and Peoples Rights Article 17 also put emphasis on education as a basic need.

The Millennium Development Goals [MDGs], goal 2 requires countries to ensure that children, both boys and girls, complete a full course of primary schooling, (<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml>). With this in mind, it would be improper to deny young-mothers learners a chance to continue with their schooling when they are ready to do so.

Pillow, (2004) describes the “discourse of contamination” that develops from the perception that immorality of the teen mothers would set a bad example to the learners’ body at school, hence contaminating fellow innocent girls. On the same issue, Wolpe Quinlan & Martinez, (1997) reported that some school committees were often unwilling to allow the pregnant and teen mothers to continue attending classes for fear that they may influence other girls and encourage them to become pregnant.

The Forum for African Women Educationalist (FAWE) has worked since 1992 to promote Education for All (EFA) through advocacy, concrete actions and policy reforms. In the mid-nineties, the forum successfully lobbied the Ministers of Education (MOE) in several African countries to change policies that exclude teen mothers from re-entering school. For example, in Kenya, the ministry of education developed the Re-entry Policy Guidelines in 1994 to ensure that pregnant schoolgirls got second chances of learning. The implementation of the guidelines has however been hindered by a range of challenges including negative perceptions from the community, stigma and lack of awareness among the stakeholders (CSA, 2008). In Malawi, since 1995, the teen mothers have been allowed by the Education Department to continue their education after pregnancy (Monsen, 1998). However just like in Kenya, it has been reported that the processing of application for readmission often takes more than a year to be approved. This is a setback for these girls who are already battling with community pressure to get married rather than to return to school because they are mothers.

Being young and under age children, the young-mothers learners fall in the same category of Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC). Other children in this category include; street children, orphans and children heading families (Mwaura & Wanyera, 2007). Due to the challenges associated with child bearing and parenting, they miss a lot in terms of education attainment. Mwaura & Wanyera also argue that as such, they are children with special educational needs.

They have often lagged behind in their educational achievements and therefore would require special educational programmes. Like other children with special educational needs are catered for, young-mother learners may benefit from individualized education plans. Teachers need to support them so that they are able to complete their education and achieve better grades which can give them better chances of getting employment. With financial empowerment, they would be able to live better lives and take good care of their children in the absence of the fathers of their children.

They may also benefit from some form of counselling in order to deal with the trauma and stigmatization they have undergone during pregnancy and after child birth. However, they may not benefit from such kind of services because they are not readily available in schools. Most primary schools in Kenya are not seconded with professional counsellors.

However, Bhana et al. (2010) argue that indeed if teachers would like to support and help these young-mother learners to achieve better results, they feel unable to offer additional lessons missed because of absence of school structures for parenting learners.

On the other hand, some teachers actually lack professionalism while dealing with these vulnerable young-mothers. They are not empathetic to the young mothers learners' situations. According to Bloem, (2000), teachers may need professionals to inform them about handling teens and their situations. They may need in-service training to keep track of changes that the society is facing. Therefore, it would be helpful for these young-mother learners to be considered for extra teaching hours to catch up with the rest of the learners in the class.

Mpanza & Nzima, (2010) also argue that teachers are often unprepared to deal with pregnant girls and adolescent mothers in the class. According to Shaningwa, (2007) teachers see the young-mother learners as adults who do not fit in within the school environment. Teachers, it is assumed, should help these young-mothers learners who are undergoing such situations and difficulties. Unfortunately, some teachers consider the young-mother learners' situation as none of their concern and a private matter (Olivier, 2000).

Parents, some teachers and other members of the community also discouraged other girls from associating with the young-mother learners arguing that they were a negative influence to them. Wanyama & Simatwa, (2011) argue that pupils shunned young-mothers learners when they attempted to socialize with them. This was as a result of being warned against associating with the young-mothers learners by their parents and community at large.

Girls who become pregnant may also be compelled to leave their parental homes to preserve their family's reputation (The Centre for Reproductive Rights, 2013). This increases their vulnerability, including the risk of becoming homeless, living in extreme poverty and at risk of sexual exploitation or human trafficking (Unterhalter, 2013). He argues that as a result, such public context (society) reflects the dynamics of stigma and discrimination which plays out in the private setting (the family).

3 CHAPTER THREE

3.1 METHODOLOGY

The study adopted qualitative approach due to the exploratory nature of this research. Qualitative research is defined as the use of qualitative data such as interviews, documents and participant observation data, to understand and explain social phenomena (Myers, 1997). According to Myers, qualitative research methods are designed to help researchers understand people and the social and cultural contexts within which they live. In addition Rubi & Babbie, (1989) argue that qualitative approach as an inductive approach is eminently effective in determining the deeper meaning of experiences of human beings and in giving a rich description of the specific phenomena being investigated in reality.

In qualitative research, designs are flexible rather than fixed. This allows the researcher to be creative and make changes on the way the research is carried out (Maxwell, 2013). Patton, (2002) argues that, the phenomenon of interest in qualitative research unfolds naturally because there is no predetermined established course.

According to Kirk & Miller, (1986), qualitative approach is a particular tradition in social science that fundamentally depends on watching people in their own territory and interacting with them in their own language, and on their own terms.

I used qualitative approach because I was interested in exploring the educational issues, especially concerns and challenges young -mothers learners faced in the process of trying to complete their schooling and whether they got support from home, school and in the society as environments that the young-mothers learners are living in. As such my data was collected and analyzed using the qualitative approach.

3.2 Participants and sampling

The study was carried out at a Division in Coastal region in Kenya where I was able to access some of the schools that had reported having young-mothers learners re-enter formal schooling after child bearing. Participants were drawn from two public primary schools that

had re-admitted young-mothers as learners and one “Rescue Village home” for young pregnant girls awaiting child bearing and young- mothers.

In order to identify the young-mothers learners in these public primary schools, I conversed with the Zonal Inspector of Schools in the zone to get the statistics of schools reported to have young-mothers who have re-entered schooling. I got the names of only two public primary schools out of the twelve schools along the main Mombasa-Tanzania highway. I contacted the head teachers of these schools and made arrangements with them on how to identify the participants.

Purposeful sampling procedure was used. Purposeful sampling refers to the deliberate selection of particular settings and persons which provide information relevant to the goals of the study. It also places the research questions of the study at the forefront (Bryman, 2012; Maxwell, 2013).

Samples were obtained through initial introduction to the young-mothers learners from the heads of the three institutions. This was done through a connection (Bali, 2011). A total of four girls were sampled and purposefully selected. They were interviewed individually and in private room-settings. Babbie, (2007) argues that samples in purposeful sampling are selected based on some predetermined criteria, which usually include knowledge of the population, its elements, as well as goals of research.

It was purposeful sampling for the main reason that they were learners as well as young-mothers in formal schooling primary schools.

3.2.1 Data gathering, collection tools and analysis

3.2.2 Data gathering and collection tools

In order to know what the young-mothers learners’ challenges were and whether there was support given, it was important to first find out what their experiences were. I then conducted a one-to-one interview with each of the four young-mothers learners. Interviewing was appropriate for this research because it sought information by exploring a phenomenon from its natural setting. Interview is a method for data collection, an engaging form of inquiry, and

an appropriate method of collecting data regarding human experiences (Kaufman, 1992, Kvale, 1996).

Reinhartz, (1992) says that “interviewing offers the researcher access to people’s ideas, thoughts and memories in their own words, rather than the words of the researcher” (p.19).

Individual interviews are described as a kind of conversation, a conversation with a purpose, or a conversation between two persons about a theme of mutual interest (Kvale, 1996). The interviewer is expected to use this dialogic situation to provide interviewee an opportunity to describe his/her ideas and put more emphasis on aspects she/he feels are important.

Unlike in other methods like questionnaires, the interviewer is largely in control of the response situation, regulating the question pace and sequence in order to fit the circumstances of the situation (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). This implies that the success of individual interviews depends on the interviewer in the sense that lack of, or inadequate skills in using this method may lead to bias in the data collected.

Two of the young-mothers learners were interviewed within the institution they were re-enrolled and away from hawk-eyed unintended observers, while the other two were interviewed in the “comfort” of the Rescue Village that is their ‘home’ and not in the schools they were attending. The reasons for collecting data from the two different settings was to enable me observe and compare behaviour of the young-mothers learners from the two environmental settings. This was meant to give me first hand encounter with the young-mothers learners as mothers performing their parenting roles and also as learners pursuing their education. Informal observation of the interaction of the young-mothers learners with their children at home was of interest to me as I wanted to understand better, the support given and the challenges they encountered trying to play the triple role of learners, mothers and as “daughters” to their “mother” in the rescue village. The four young-mothers learners were therefore the primary informants. After the interviews, I then evaluated and analysed their responses.

In addition to that, additional data was collected through informal talks with the two head teachers of the primary schools and the director of the rescue village. Gall et al, (2007) encourage informal talks as a means of collecting information through spontaneous generations of questions during a natural interaction. The head teachers and the director of

the Rescue Village home played key roles in accessing the young-mothers learners as they acted as my gate keepers.

3.2.3 Data Analysis

All the individual interviews with the young-mothers learners were audio taped after agreeing with the participants to do so. After completing each interview, I transcribed the tape recordings. The transcription process helped me to get closer to the data as I was able to think critically about what each interviewee was saying and how it was said. I then read the typed transcripts several times while listening to the corresponding audio tape. This was to ensure accuracy of the transcription and to come to a better overall understanding of each participant's experiences. The process of transcribing and listening also prompted additional questions for subsequent interviewees and even the approach I used in asking the questions.

I then used the "highlighting" approach according to Van Manen, (1990) to uncover the thematic aspects of the young-mothers learners' schooling experiences. In this approach, I read the transcribed text several times and the statements that appeared to be revealing about the phenomenon were highlighted.

Themes were identified by highlighting material in the interview transcripts that spoke of the young-mothers learners' experiences. I then selected each of the highlighted phrases and tried to ascertain what meaning was put forward in the highlighted material. After identifying the themes, I then embarked on the process of recording the themes and describing how they were interrelated. Rewriting continued until I felt that the themes and the relationship between the themes were identified as accurately as possible.

3.3 Pilot study

A pilot, or feasibility study, is a small experiment designed to test logistics and gather information prior to a larger study, in order to improve the latter's quality and efficiency. It is a miniature study or a small-scale version of the full study that will be performed later (Wheeler, 2010). A pilot study can reveal deficiencies in the design of a proposed experiment or procedure and these can then be addressed before time and resources are expended on large scale studies.

A pilot study can also be termed as a small study which helps design a further confirmatory study and may have various purposes such as testing study procedures, validity of tools, estimation of the recruitment rate, and estimation of parameters such as the variance of the outcome variable to calculate sample size (Arain, Campbell, Cooper & Lancaster, 2010). It is necessary that a pilot study is done before a full research project so that the researcher knows whether or not the study is valid and that the study's design will be able to capture the data being sought.

A pilot study was done before the actual formal interviews with the young-mothers learners. During piloting, the interviewee had problems understanding the questions asked in English and I had to interpret the questions to Kiswahili. Kiswahili is the national language in Kenya. It is also the language that is commonly used by the people of the Coast region where the division of the research is located.

3.4 Validity and Reliability

The questions that were used were initially in English but they were translated into Kiswahili which is the local language that all participants understand. The decision to phrase the questions and conduct the interview in Kiswahili was arrived at after conducting the pilot project in English. As noted above, I found out that the respondent had difficulties understanding some of the questions and responding in English. I engaged the services of one of the Kiswahili teachers from the language panel of area educational Zone who restructured the same questions in Kiswahili. This was to make sure that the respondents understood what was being asked and respond according to that understanding. I retested the interview guide again to check its reliability before conducting the main interview with the targeted participants.

3.5 Trustworthiness

In order to establish trustworthiness, the interview transcripts were taken back to the respective respondents and I asked them to verify if that was really how they wanted to respond to the respective questions. The respondents agreed that what was transcribed was what they had said during the interviews. However, the youngest of the young-mothers

learners wished to change some of her responses and she did so, but the changes were semantics and the choice of words used.

Similarly, coding of raw data was done until almost 95% was clearly coded. Miles & Huberman, (1994) argue that while check-coding aids for definitional clarity, it is a good reliability check

3.6 Ethical considerations

Ethics have become a key aspect in conducting a meaningful research. This therefore means that the ethical behaviour of individual researchers is under unprecedented scrutiny (Best & Kahn, 2006). Consideration was given to complying with ethical measures in the course of conducting research of this sensitive topic. In order to ensure the safety and rights of the participating young-mothers learners, I informed and explained to them about the prevailing ethical considerations, for example informed consent, permission from the University, permission from the director of the home they were living, their rights as participants, consent from their parents, voluntary participation, anonymity and confidentiality (Berg, 1995).

Authorization and consent to conduct the study was given from the Norwegian Social Sciences Data Service (NSD). The NSD gave their consent through an e mail dated 21 August 2014. The reference number was 39206. An introductory letter was also obtained from the University of Oslo, department of SNE which I used to introduce myself to the relevant authorities where the study was conducted.

In Kenya permission to conduct the study in the Rescue Village home was sought from the director who signed the letter of permission acknowledging approval. I held a familiarization meeting with her and explained further the purpose of my visit. I informed her of my wish to conduct the research in her institution and therefore wanted her to be the gate keeper in order to access the young-mothers learners. As for those in the public primary schools, I sought permission from the head teachers who in turn introduced me to the young-mothers learners.

3.7 Informed consent

I obtained informed consent from each participant to ensure that the participants had a complete understanding of the purpose and methods to be used in the study and the demands

of the study (Best & Kahn, 2006). The participating young-mothers learners were informed that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time if they were not willing to continue with participation. The consent was given in writing.

Informed consent was an ongoing process for example before switching on the tape recorder during interviews, I asked each individual if it was okay to tape record the conversation. Some times during the interviews, when a respondent indicated discomfort in answering some questions by their body language I reminded them of their rights and that they were not obliged to answer or give information they were not comfortable giving or if they felt they did not wish to do so.

3.8 Privacy and Confidentiality

Privacy and confidentiality were given the deserved consideration (Cohen & Manion, 1994). I was sensitive not only on how information was to be protected from unauthorized observation, but also if and how participants were to be notified of any unforeseen findings from the research that they may, or may not ,have wanted to be known. The ethical principle refers to the obligation on my part as the researcher to respect each participant as a person capable of making an informed decision regarding participation in the research study. I also made it known to each participant that she was free to ask any questions she wanted or seek clarification.

All the information that was to be gathered would be kept confidential. A high degree of trust was maintained that no information was to be released as this would help to reduce worries on the part of the participants. High participant's dignity was maintained and this made the participants feel respected and gave them autonomy and control.

The privacy of the participants was granted through keeping them anonymous in the study. This involved being sensitive of the data collected in view of the participants, the setting and information gathered which was put into consideration so as to ensure adequate privacy. As such, the participants were only to be identified with letters and numbers as PT1, PT2, PT3 and PT4.

4 CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the challenges experienced by the young-mothers learners within their school, households, and neighbourhood in relation to their educational participation. The findings presented demonstrate the young-mothers learners' efforts to balance the triple roles of learners, daughters (female children in the African settings), and as mothers. The study also highlights some of the factors arising from the social locations of the young-mothers learners. These factors include the school, household and neighbourhoods. These factors are reviewed in light of how they affect the young-mothers learners' performance as learners after re-entry to formal education.

These factors were seen as barriers that affected their full and meaningful participation in education for success. The girls told me of their experiences with very heavy hearts, telling me that they had not had any form of counselling before and after they re-entered schooling. Counselling is supposed to be provided to these young-mothers learners as stipulated in the return to school policy. The policy guidelines are in the appendixes. Finally the coping strategies used by the young-mothers learners were also explored.

The study was primarily focusing on challenges that the young-mothers learners experienced and how they coped with these challenges. However, circumstances and reasons leading to pregnancy could not escape my concern. After having talks with the girls, they explained the circumstances that led to their being pregnant.

After data transcription, the following topics emerged;

1. Reasons leading to pregnancy
2. Reaction to pregnancy
3. Household factors, cultural norms and poverty

4. Stigmatization and discrimination
5. Lack of support from school, home and the community
6. Adjusting to motherhood and balancing the triple roles of learner, daughter and mother
7. Lack of confident parenting and interaction with the babies
8. Coping strategies

The young-mothers learners felt that these challenges acted as barriers to successful achievement of their goals in the academic world and competing with peers in the same class.

4.2 Reason leading to Pregnancy.

During the interview with the girls, the reason leading to pregnancy was the main theme that emerged. The following were the sub-themes.

4.2.1 Lack of sex education

All the four participants interviewed mentioned that they were not aware or did not know anything about implications of sexual intercourse. They did not know how they would become pregnant.

PT1: "We were young and had just started a relationship. My boyfriend told me that he wanted me to sleep with him. He also assured me that I would not get pregnant because it was the first time. You see when boys want to sleep with you if you are a virgin that is the excuse most of them give. My friends also used to tell me the same. So, I believed it when my boyfriend told me".

PT2: "I had never been told about how one can become pregnant. I thought we were just playing the girl-boy game. I really regret and wish I had known that he was lying to me".

4.2.2 Adolescent sexual experiment

One young-mother learner said that she had only learnt in theory about sex and sexual reproduction in the class (this is a topic in the standard six science curriculum in Kenya). She is one of the young-mother learner who admitted that she became pregnant during the first

term while in standard six. On the other hand, two of them said that they never thought one would become pregnant if it was the “first time” they were engaging in sex. This is a myth that adolescents always believe in especially when they want to justify themselves.

Another young-mother learner accepted responsibilities and admitted that she became ‘too difficult’ for her parents/ guardians to control. She went on to experiment what she had heard other peers had done and they had not become pregnant. To her, it was a stage in her life. Adolescence is a period where most adolescents turn rebellious and do not listen to counsel. They prefer to explore and take advice from peers and not from parents.

PT1: “A boy who was older than me but in the same class asked me one day when we were going home if we could try out what was in the books even before the teacher taught us. Foolishly I agreed but he just touched me all over before I stopped him from doing it real. (Here she meant having complete sexual intercourse). After several weeks had passed, a neighbour to my aunt told me he loved me and wanted to be my boyfriend. To me having a boyfriend was a prestige. Little did I know I would later regret. I slept with this man on one occasion and finally I realized I was pregnant. It was my first time”.

PT2: “Let me say I never listened to my aunt or ‘small mother’ (as is culturally referred to). In fact I hated her when she would warn me against my boyfriend. I was very stubborn and had just started a relationship with this boy in a nearby secondary school. I did not know much about sex and even this boy assured me that I would never be pregnant if it was the first time. We were experimenting but unfortunately, it resulted in pregnancy and I was only 14 years”.

4.2.3 Transactional sex

Two of the young-mothers learners, (including the **pilot project participant**) the sexual encounter that resulted in their pregnancy was as a result of transactional sex. Transactional sex is when money or gifts are exchanged for a sexual relationship. This kind of relationship is different from prostitution. The two said that their parents could not buy them even the essential things like sanitary pads and body oil. The inability of their parents to provide for their adolescence’s necessities made them exchange sex in order to receive financial and material gifts. There were men willing to part with their money for the girls to buy their commodities but they had to give their body in exchange.

PT2: “My father could not buy me pads and other things like perfumed soap or body oil. This boyfriend would sometimes bring me nice smelling body lotion. Sometimes he gave me money and I used it to buy pads. That is why I ended up sleeping with him.

PT 3 “I was in class five when I started my periods. When I asked my step-mother to give me money to buy pads, she said I should not bother her with petty things which I could afford if I utilized my body well. Imagine!! This is what led me to borrow money from one of our men neighbours in exchange for sex. The man also happened to be my father’s greatest customer for the traditional liquor he made. This man had helped me on two occasions and the third time he said he could not give his money for free and that I had to “return the favour” which landed me with a pregnancy’.

(Pilot project, a 16 ½ year old young-mother learner): “My father refused to give me money even for buying underpants. I met this friend to my cousin who enticed me with gifts and money to buy what I needed but I had to repay him using my body. It was not good, I know, but I did not have a choice. But when I became pregnant, he disappeared and my parents were furious”.

4.2.4 Sexual violence and abuse

However, for one participating young-mother learner, she did not have even the slightest idea of what pregnancy was all about, leave alone knowing how one became pregnant. She had not started her periods when she was defiled and got pregnant. Hers was not a case of sexual experiment but sexual violence.

For PT4, her pregnancy resulted after being sexually abused by her own step-father (though at the time she was being sexually defiled, she never knew the man as a step-father. She knew him as her biological father. Even when conducting the interview, she referred to the man as her biological father but the director of the rescue village clarified to me that the man was actually the step father). This is how she put it.

PT4 “My father would touch my private parts and breast when we were going to church. He would then drag me into a bush on the way to church and rape me. He had warned me never to reveal to anybody what he was doing and if I did, he would kill me. Even when I became pregnant, I didn’t know as I had never started my menses”.

Discussion

From the above findings, it can be argued that the young-mothers learners did not become pregnant by choice but by circumstances beyond their control. This therefore contradicts what Hanna, (2000) and Clemmens, (2003) reported in their findings that some adolescents do plan their pregnancy and seek motherhood to gain adult status and a sense of fulfilment.

Lack of sex education

Lack of sex education was cited as a contributing factor leading to pregnancy. In many countries particularly in Sub Saharan Africa, many teenagers are not aware of their growing bodies and what is required of them to stay safe. They may not know what to do when their peers and older boys and men pressurize them to have sex (Erulker & Matheka, 2007). This is in contrast to countries whose adolescents are equipped with balanced and comprehensive information about sexuality (East, 2006).

According to Ioannide-Kapolou, (2004) lack of adequate information on sex is one of the reasons for the increasing number of unwanted pregnancies among teenage girls. On the other hand, this lack of awareness can also be explained in the context of African culture which tends not to encourage debate on matters related to sex and sexuality between parents and their children. According to Maluleke, (2003b), African culture assigns such responsibility of addressing sex and sexual matters to initiation schools.

Initiation is a rite of passage marking entrance or acceptance into a group or society as indicated in chapter two in this study. Initiation schools were supposed to educate both boys and girls about their biological changes, social morals, relationships, self-control and their changing roles as young men and women. For example, a sexual education programme in South Africa called “Vukhomba” (Maluleke 2003b). In Kenya, there are forty two different tribes and each tribe had their different ways of performing such rites. However, of late these programmes are being done mostly by different churches (Ginsberg, Kariuki & Kimamo, 2014).

Curiosity and experimentation

Curiosity to experiment with sex was another reason cited as having resulted in pregnancy. Two of the participating young-mothers learners indicated that they engaged in sex out of curiosity and they never thought they would be pregnant on the first encounter. They ignored the counsel of their parents and chose to go with what peers told them. The study supports Lerner & Steinberg, (2004) findings where they argue that adolescence, being a stage where teenagers adjust in their physical and emotional changes in life; they prefer to go with their peers rather than with their parents. According to Montgomery, (2003) early adolescence also represent the period of sexual maturation.

Transactional sex

Apart from lack of sex education and curiosity to experiment, transactional sex was found to be another reason that the girls gave as leading to their being pregnant. Transactional sex is when money or gifts are exchanged for sexual relationships. As indicated in chapter two, these kinds of sexual relationships tend to be longer and are more often intergenerational (i.e. between an older and younger person). Participants in transactional sexual relationships frame themselves as girlfriends/boyfriend (Hoefinger, 2013). Transactional sexual relationships are particularly common in sub-Saharan Africa where they often involve relationships between older men and younger women or girls (Cole, 2010).

Though some researchers have shown that transactional sex is not necessarily driven by poverty, a general consensus among those studying transactional sex is that it is associated with poverty (Groes-Green, 2013). My study supports Groes-Green's findings and can link poverty as a factor that led the girls to engage in this kind of sexual relationships. Two of the girls and the pilot project participants interviewed said that they received money and other gifts from the male partners in exchange for sex in order to sustain their needs as adolescents. Were, (2007) also cites high levels of poverty in households in Western Kenya as a cause of parental inability to sufficiently provide for the needs of their adolescent daughters resulting into their sexual exploitation by men. Also according to Quinlivan, (2006), girls that are exposed to family strife and deprivations in their early childhood or in adolescence are more likely to become young mothers or teen mothers.

Sexual violence

Sexual violence was another reason found to have resulted in a pregnancy. As indicated in chapter two, Miller et al, (2007) argue that unintended pregnancies are two or three times more likely to be associated with abuse than intended ones. The study findings also agrees with UNIFEM, (2010) which reported that worldwide, 50 percent of sexual assaults are committed against girls under 16years. According to Erulker and Mekbib, (2007) research also shows that in some countries, many girls' first sexual encounters are non-consensual, and the incidence of forced sex is higher among very young adolescents. One of the participants of this study was a victim of sexual abuse which started at the age of 11. This can also be concurred with by recent media reports in Kenya where the youngest child to be a mother was a 10 year old, just this year 2015. Surely, no one can argue that the girl consented to sexual

advances by whoever is responsible for the pregnancy. As I write this, the matter is still under investigation and police are yet to make any arrests.

Cases of sexual violence are not isolated to Kenya alone rather they are worldwide vices that must be fought by all right thinking human population. A UNFPA, (2012b) report indicates that between 15 per cent and 45 per cent of young women in Latin America and the Caribbean respectively, have their first sexual experiences under coercion and without using a condom. Cases of forced sex were also prevalent in the Asia Pacific region where the likelihood of being a victim of coerced sex was found to be higher for girls experiencing sex for the first time at a younger age and lower for girls whose sexual debut took place at a later age (UNFPA, 2013b). The very high level of gender-based violence reported among adolescent girls is a matter of major concern.

4.3 Reaction to pregnancy

The study found that the reaction on discovering one's status were varied but generally all expressed shock, fear, anxiety and confusion. They also felt ashamed and the fact that the pregnancy would result in their education being disrupted disturbed them a lot. The sub-themes emerging from the reaction to pregnancy were highlighted as follows.

4.3.1 Girls' reacted to news about pregnancy with shock, denial, fear and shame

Discovering that one is pregnant was perceived as a shocking experience that even led to denial by the participants. They indicated that they did not think they were pregnant and they expressed shock and intense fear. Some were anxious and could not believe they were indeed pregnant. They also viewed it as a shameful thing not only to them but to their families, school and community;

PT1: "Well, at first I was shocked and did not know how I would break the news to my parents. I feared what my parents would say or do to me. I first informed my partner who accepted responsibility that time but when I asked him some days later what the way forward would be, he said he was not ready for the child so I should get rid of it. I felt angry and this really troubled me. I was not certain of what to do next. I then gathered courage and I informed my parents.

PT2: “....aah let me say that it was shocking. I cried for a whole night. I was confused and did not know what to do”.

PT3: “This was a shock to me. I tried to think how it happened and still did not believe. I feared what would happen to me, my education and even the child I was carrying. You see I knew very little to do with pregnancy”.

PT4: “It was really difficult and shocking for me. You see I never knew it until the school teacher and the head teacher noticed and asked me. I said I was not pregnant and that was when I was taken to hospital. After it was confirmed that I was indeed pregnant, I just started crying and did not know what to do. I never believed even after the tests were done. I did not know what to be pregnant meant since I had no idea about consequences of sexual abuse. I just knew that what my father was doing to me was not right but he had threatened me with death. So I could not tell anyone what was happening. I had not even started my periods, so that was the last thing in my mind”. (After deep thoughts, she sighed and commented how she hated her father and the whole family for not even listening to her side of the story).

Pregnancy as a shameful occurrence and a sudden stumbling block to future endeavours

The girls felt ashamed after learning that they were indeed pregnant. They wished it never happened. For two of the young-mothers learners, the taunting and teasing left them with emotional scars (one actually broke down while telling of her experience during that trying time).

According to the girls, being a mother at their age interfered with their developmental process and educational achievements. To them, the pregnancy happened at the least expected of time. As a result it would retard their progress on activities that they as teenagers, would have liked to achieve. The following were their statements:

PT1 “I never expected to have a child at this age. I felt ashamed and embarrassed. You see when you are a mother and still in school, there are so many things that you dreamt of but cannot be achieved with this burden. You are no longer able to handle and concentrate on school work successfully as there is also the child to attend to. I just get stressed as there is a lot of work to be done. I fell sleepy most of the times in class and often miss out on what is taught”.

PT2 “I feel my child is a big burden but I have no choice. You see when you fail; you think that it is because you have a child who is distracting you whenever you want to study. I just wish I listened to my aunt maybe I would be doing well in my exams. It is really shameful that I cannot perform well like before. It is only through passing well one can get a good

secondary school and achieve better grades for a better career. Right now my father and aunt say after I complete my primary school, I train in hairdressing and start earning my money to feed and clothe my child. You see, the child has really cut down my dreams of becoming a nurse!”

PT3 “Even as I study hard to achieve better grades, I still do not get good marks like I used to get before I gave birth. Studying and you have a child is really not the kind of thing I would want for any young person. I used to dream that I would complete my education and get a good job before I start bearing children, but all that has been cut short. You see the grades I get will only probably accord me a chance to join a village polytechnic and do dressmaking course and I really wanted to become a teacher. If only I did not have this burden, maybe I would excel and become some one important”.

PT4 “I think my future was ruined by my becoming a mother at such an early age. I try as much as possible to concentrate in class but the thought of my child and what the future holds for us drives me crazy and I lose concentration. I just feel bad and ashamed that it happened to me. I wanted to be a teacher or a lawyer when I completed my university, but as things are going on now, I don’t see myself becoming any of those. I feel so bad knowing that I don’t have anyone who can help me with my problems”.

I asked her to tell me why she thought she cannot achieve what she wanted. She responded:

“Whom do I leave my child with? Who will even pay for my secondary education? I don’t see myself going further as I have to look for a job after my standard eight so that I can have money to educate my child. You see I have no parents to rely on and I won’t live in this home forever!”

Unplanned occurrence

The participants said that they found their situation of being mothers to be a confusing experience that they consider happened without planning for it. This indicates that the pregnancy resulting to motherhood happened when they never thought it as a possibility. The extracts below from the interview show that the pregnancy happened without planning for it.

PT1: “It was just a mistake which I really regret that it happened. I was still underage and would have liked to finish my education first. My age mates are way ahead of me and I am still in primary school! I wish I could have been able to say no and resist his tempting plans”.

PT2: “I didn’t know it would turn out this way. If only I knew I would become pregnant, I would not have got myself involved with that boy in the first place. He made me pregnant and he went away, leaving me alone to carry the burden alone. My life was

shattered and I have to think a lot on what to do next. I wish I had foreseen this and also listened to my aunt, I would have acted differently”.

PT3: “My life is never going to be the same again. If I knew men were like that, I would have distanced myself from that man. I would not have agreed to sleep with him even after he gave me money. How am I going to bring up this child all alone?”

PT4: “I never at any time thought that what my father was doing would result to me being a mother at my tender age. I never planned for this to happen and again I feared he would kill me. It was a big mistake that should not have happened. If may be, I had informed my head teacher when it all started, I think the pregnancy would not have occurred”.

4.3.2 Parents/guardians’ reaction

The greatest fear by all the participating young-mothers learners was how their parents and guardians would react once they found that they were pregnant. They all reported that the parents or guardians were not happy on learning that they were pregnant. To many parents, the pregnancy came as a surprise. According to the young-mothers learners, their parents’ or guardians’ reactions were varied as some were also shocking.

Some mentioned that the reactions from their fathers were much more intense and difficult to handle. The fathers were more deeply troubled and they felt deeply hurt.

PT1: “My father had sworn he would kick me out of his house and even threatened to put me in jail together with the person responsible. He said that I had wasted his money and he did not want to see me. They were both angry and vowed to do a follow-up but the man disappeared from the village and I have never seen him again. He has never even seen his son, leave alone giving any support”.

PT2: “My father and brother were very angry after my aunt told them. That was the reason my father threatened to marry me off since I had become a disgrace to the family. As for my step-mother she seemed happy because I would stop learning and be married off and they get money to ‘enjoy’”

PT3 “My father and step-mother were really mad .My step-mother abused me and my father threatened to chase me out of his home. I had to move to my grandmother’s house as I feared my father. My father said I should abort the pregnancy but I feared I would die as I had secretly tried to take poison immediately I learnt that I was pregnant. I informed a lady teacher who organized on how to get rescue from this home. The director came with another woman (referring to the children’s officer) and a police officer and I came here when I was four months pregnant.”

PT4” Even as much as my father knew he was responsible, he still was very angry with me; one for being pregnant and two for reporting him to the authority. My mother was equally mad at me and so were my elder brothers”.

4.3.3 Reactions by partner about pregnancy

All the four participants said that the men responsible for their pregnancies denied responsibilities. Two of the girls mentioned their partners agreed when first informed about the pregnancy but later denied responsibilities. However, when the reality sank in, they said their partners used witch craft to confuse the parents/guardians of the young-mothers learners for fear that they would be prosecuted for impregnating school girls. These are cultural beliefs which are very common in the Division of the study and Coast region as a whole. Some participants reported use of witchcraft to make the matter non-existence.

PT1” When I told him, he agreed and said he would send his people to my father for negotiation of the child’s upkeep. When my father visited the boy’s home, he had disappeared. Then my father reported to the children’s department. The officers came to my home and I took them to the man’s home. His elder brother said they would arrange on how they would avail the boy to go and report to the officers. That was the end of the matter. That brother of his said that no-one will ever come to their home again in the name of looking for my boyfriend even if we went to the police. He bragged of how he had used magic powers (witchcraft) to confuse the officers. Sure enough, the officers never followed the matter again and I have never seen the boy again in this village. May be he comes at night, who knows!”

PT2 “My boyfriend said it was okay at first. He said that he would inform his parents so that they can negotiate on how to provide for the child. Then after a few weeks, he offered me money to carry out an abortion, which I totally refused. Then I informed my aunt and she informed my father. His clan members told my father they would come to negotiate about the whole issue, either he marries me or he takes care of his child. Finally they sent word to my father that he should take care of his children and grandchildren and stop wasting time following their boy because he could never give even a cent. That was the end of the matter and even when we reported to the police, they never followed him up. You know his father is a known “mghanga” (Kiswahili word for witch doctor) so I think he used charms so that we do not follow up the matter.”

In the other cases the partners flatly denied responsibility for the pregnancy. It was even more stressing for PT4 as her own father was the one responsible and had threatened her with death. The young-mother learner’s new born baby had to be subjected to a DNA test after the judge ordered it so that they could have a strong case to prosecute the father.

PT3: “The man who was responsible for my pregnancy denied completely having touched me, leave alone to have slept with me. He accused me of trying to create enmity between him and my father so that he would not receive liquor on credit from my father”.

4.3.4 Reaction by teachers and fellow learners

The young-mothers learners said that they were intimidated by teachers and their fellow learners. One of the girls pointed out that while her body structure started changing, boys in the class started making very sarcastic comments with some even drawing illustrations on the chalkboard. This would trigger laughter from the rest of the learners in the class. It was really humiliating and I felt very ashamed. Some learner in the school also gossiped about their situation. The girls gave their experiences in school as follows:

PT1: “When my pregnancy started showing, I tried to hide by wearing the hijab worn by Muslim girls in the school. But once pupils came to learn about it, it was never the same again. The pupils in my class would make cat calls when I entered the class. I felt embarrassed and ashamed. Even one teacher called me and told me to stop wearing the “sacred attire” (meaning the hijab) to hide my bad manners. This really affected me and I stopped attending school for some time, but then I went back and continued up to the time I was almost due.”

PT2: “Some learners in my class would just get into the class and start saying; “Someone has eaten raw beans and the stomach is swollen! Who gave you the beans?”(The indirect reference of a pregnant out of wed person, and is always very demeaning and humiliating). This would make the whole class burst out laughing. Nilikuwa nakasirika sana lakini nikajifanya kana kwamba sijali, lakini moyoni nilikuwa naumia sana. (This really annoyed me but always pretended that I didn’t care, though inside, I was really hurting very much)”.

The taunting intimidated some pregnant young learners who said that they stopped attending school altogether and only re-entered in a different school. This was confirmed by the director of the Rescue Village who concurred with what the two girls participating in the study had said. They had difficult experiences in their former schools and only continued with schooling after they were rescued and transferred to their current school until they gave birth. They later re-entered in the current school after child-birth. The following were the narratives from the two young-mother learners;

PT3: “When my class teacher got to know that I was pregnant, he announced in the class that his class is meant for learners and not those waiting to be mothers. He actually emphasized to me whether I had heard what he had just said. I just started crying. He told me

to get out of his class and look for the father of the child if I so wanted to get married. This was really hurting. As for the pupils in the class they kept on making fun of my situation. I isolated myself and just wanted to be alone. When I could take it no more, I told the lady teacher and I stayed in my grandmother's house as my father did not want to see me".

PT4 "Some of my fellow pupils who knew my problems were very sorry about what had happened at the hands of my father. But those who had no idea of my experiences just made fun of me. Some were even abusive and would attempt to touch my body to feel the baby. I cried and reported them to the head teacher, who at that time had already taken my case to the police and they were waiting for the director of this home to come and take me away. Though the pupils who had abused me were punished, it did not take away the agony and heartache that I had gone through".

One of the head teachers had this to say when asked why only one young-mother learner had re-entered school after child birth. *"As much as I would like to re-enrol them back, the girls themselves or their parents never come back to seek for re-entry to school. The girls are always ashamed of what they have done and they fear to be laughed at by their fellow pupils and even to be ridiculed by some of the teachers. In fact even the one already back faces some challenges but she has sort of become resilient'.*

4.3.5 Gossip from fellow learners

The young-mothers learners also reported that some learners in the school were always gossiping about their status and saying very unkind things about them.

They shared their experiences like this;

PT1 "Some learners especially those big girls without babies talk carelessly and even make up stories about me and my baby. In fact I overheard one of the girls telling others that the father of my baby is a very old man and that the baby looked like a monkey. When they saw me behind them, they started changing the topic thinking that I had not heard what they had said. I confronted the girl who was talking and demanded to know why she was talking ill of me and my baby. I felt so bad and wanted to beat her up but then I thought of my baby, my education and the warnings from my father that I should behave well in school. So I just shook her and left her and walked away. But it hurt me so much".

PT2 "Sometimes some learners would be talking to another laughing loudly and looking at me. But when I get closer to them, they keep quiet or walk away. Obviously this tells me that they were talking about me and whatever it was they were talking was not good".

PT3 “Yes some learners do tease and talk bad about me and my baby. They ridicule me and say that their class is not meant for mothers but learners who are capable of performing and not those who are thinking about babies”.

PT4 “I feel bad when the other pupils gossip about me and talk about my child. If only they knew what happened, they would just shut up”.

Discussion

From the above findings, the reaction by the girls and their parents was that of shock, fear, anxiety, shame and anger. They also faced intimidation from the school environment (i.e. teachers and learners). This was culminated by denial from the men responsible for the pregnancies. The young-mothers learners reported having experienced fear and denial on realization of pregnancy. These experiences are in line with a study carried out by Parekh and La Ray, (1997). The study reported that teenagers’ first reaction when they learned about their pregnancies included shock and denial. This left them with emotional scars to heal and unforgiving parents to deal with.

Some also felt like they should abandon schooling all together. According to evidence from research, girls who became pregnant and teen mothers were unlikely to continue with schooling (UNESCO, 2012). The findings support what other authors like Atuyambe *et al*, (2008) and Dlamini, (2002) suggested that adolescent mothers are stigmatized by the community and are likely to experience violence from parents and rejection by partners. All the four young-mothers learners reported to have been rejected by their partners after pregnancy and they had not seen them even by the time the study was being conducted. They also reported violence from their parents.

From the information given by these young-mothers learners, it can be said that becoming pregnant and a young-mother while still in school is not something to boast about. The shame, guilt and confusion haunt the young-mothers who become stigmatized as a result and need a lot of support. Their agony was actually confirmed by the informal talks I held with the director of the rescue village. She said that the girls she rescued had been going through a lot of challenges in their former schools and homes.

The feeling of shame made the girls isolate themselves most of the times and did not want to be with other girls their age. Some studies have also reported that members of some communities regard teenage pregnancy as a shameful event for the families of the teenagers

(Mpetshwa, 2000). These findings give an indication that teenage pregnancy is generally considered a shameful encounter.

The study findings also indicate that the young-mothers learners find themselves in a situation that can be considered as a crisis. Caplan's (1964) crisis theory maintains that a crisis occurs when the individual encounters what is perceived as threatening and challenging to the individual's manner of coping. The four participants indicated that their pregnancies were unexpected and traumatic. This was found to generate feelings of being overwhelmed. The reactions of the participants were found to be consistent with those explained by Kubler-Ross regarding the five-stage experience of grief (Chapman, 2006). Kubler-Ross' model points that people can experience emotional upsets that are similar to those experienced during grief when dealing with something that is difficult for the first time.

Kaufman et al, (2000) assert that both pregnancy and parenting are the leading reasons girls give for dropping out of school while Theron & Dunn, (2006) argue that adolescent child bearing is especially disruptive to the educational process of girls and as a consequence, many young teenage mothers leave school never to return.

The findings above prove that the young-mothers learners really regret what happened and they were not comfortable at how their life had become. They felt cheated into falling pregnant and then left to bear their crosses on their shoulders with no help whatsoever from the men responsible. This again supports Dlamini's (2002) report in a research carried out in South Africa that adolescent mothers are likely to face rejection from their partners.

It is also clear that the young-mothers learners undergo difficulties while in the school environment and they get a lot of misunderstanding. Instead they are stigmatized by their fellow learners who gossip without first finding out why they are in that situation. Peer pressure is usually more common than support and understanding for the young-mothers learners (Arlington Public School, 2004). Hurtful comments lead the young-mothers learners to feel isolated from the rest of the class and not supported by other learners (Chigona & Chetty, 2007). The findings again concur with what Chigona & Chetty, (2007) found in a study carried out in South Africa. The study reported that while boys often attacked teen mothers at school with direct and aggressive verbal comments, girls tend to disassociate themselves from the teen mothers.

4.4 Household factors, Cultural norms and poverty

At the household levels, some key factors emerged and these influenced the likelihood of re-entering school. These factors were; support by the father as the head of the family over the decision to return to school, the structure of the household and the availability of financial support from either the young-mothers learners' partner or the extended family.

Two of the young-mothers learners had this to say when asked about their father's opinion on school re-entry.

PT1 "At first, he did not want to pay for my school. After I gave birth, my uncle talked to him and he agreed to allow me back to school. However, there were warnings that if I got another baby, he would chase me away from his home. I could not also re-enter my former school as that would make him look bad in the eyes of the society/community. My mother agreed to look after my baby while I attended school but I have to do all the work in the evenings including caring for my baby".

PT2 "At first my father did not want to hear about school anymore. He was really upset and wanted to marry me off. He even arranged how he would visit the relatives of the man responsible for my pregnancy but it did not work out. So my father told me that he was not going to pay my school exams as I had 'embarrassed' him in the society. My uncle and aunt talked to him and he agreed. My aunt took me to her home and I re-entered in this school. He has eventually accepted to pay for my school fees and examinations".

However, for two participants, the support and decision came from the director of the children department, director of the rescue home and the head teacher of the school they were enrolled in.

PT3 "I have never seen my father ever since I came to this village. So he does not know whether I attend school or not. It is madam director who took me back to school. The director had been told by the children's officer to make sure that I went back to school if I wished to. So, I was re-enrolled in the new school until I was about to give birth. After giving birth, I stayed home until the baby was one year, then I re-entered school again.. My father has never even come to visit me here. So he does not know whether I am in school or not".

PT4 "Immediately my father (read step-father as he was a stepfather but the young-mother did not know until it became a police case) heard that I was pregnant, he threatened me and chased me away from home. My mother could not say anything as she was also warned of consequences if she opposed my father's decision. He does not know whether I am in school or not. We have never communicated. I have only seen him one time when I appeared in court".

In addition, poverty within the family was also a challenge that the young-mother learners encountered while attending school. Girls interviewed said that the financial challenges within the family were making them sometimes skip school and thus miss out on competing favourably with their peers.

Since poverty is a wide spread phenomenon especially in the rural areas in Kenya, the girls said that their parents could not afford to hire a babysitter for the infant so that the young-mothers learners could attend school without worries. This meant that if the old relatives or parents had engagements to attend to in order to provide for the whole family, then the girl had to stay at home to take care of her child. They could not afford to read while at home because they were also obliged to do other household chores. This was especially so for two of the girls who live with their families/relatives.

The lack of financial support from the families of the young-mothers learners multiplies the challenges experienced by these young-mothers learners. This is what they shared with me during the interview.

PT1 "My father is employed as a cleaner in a nearby local hotel. Sometimes they can go for many months without being paid. My mother has to go and work in people's farms or houses. I have to miss school and look after my baby and do other household chores when she is called to do such jobs. I cannot read nor do homework. The money my mother is paid is not even enough to buy everything we need at home".

PT2 "My aunt cooks and sells fish outside her house. When the season is low, she has to look for other odd jobs to do during the day. This means I have to miss school to look after the baby and do other chores at home. My father does not buy anything for the baby as he says he cannot take care of another man's child. When we do examinations, my performance is not as good as I would have liked because of the many days I miss school because of my child".

For the other two girls poverty was seen in the sense that they could not afford the necessities for their babies and for their own personal needs. The rescue home they live in provides for babies' caregivers during the day and also provides meals for them. However, due to the financial constraints, the director cannot afford to give the girls all they need in terms of material things. Things like perfumed soap, body oil, clothes for the baby and the young-mother or other personal items that an adolescent girl would need, were not in the priority list. The director solicits for funds from well wishers and sometimes the funds received can only cater for food and pay the workers. When I asked the girls how this affected their education, this is what they said.

PT3: "At school, my friends come with nice things and would share with me. They expect me to share what I have with them, but there is nothing to share because I cannot afford. As such, they feel that I am not generous. This affects me inwardly knowing that I cannot afford it. Even if I were to get money, I can only use it to buy what is very necessary for me and my baby. Due to the taunting by these friends, I feel low and lose concentration in class and this affects my performance".

PT4 "I cannot afford nice things like perfumed soap, body lotion and other things a girl desires. Sometimes I sweat a lot and I cannot keep off the bad smell especially when my breasts are full and milk is coming out. This makes other girls to keep away from me and boys laugh at me. Therefore this makes me feel out of place and I keep on thinking how I can work to get money and buy what I need. I cannot concentrate in class with so many thoughts occupying my mind".

Discussion

The evidence above is a clear indication that neither the mother of the girls nor the young-mothers learners could make an ultimate decision regarding their fate after conceiving and even after giving birth. Re-entry to school by the young-mothers learners was largely dependent upon decisions made at the household levels by fathers who sometimes did not give priority to education once a girl becomes a mother. Odaga & Heneveld, (1995) argue that socio-cultural practice that supports patriarchy structures have been acknowledged to have negatively affected the education of girls in general and not just the young-mothers learners. As such the mothers to the young-mothers learners could not intervene on behalf of their young daughters.

The old mothers feared the consequences and the wrath of their spouses if they opposed what the fathers had decided. One of the old fathers wanted to marry her daughter off. According to the informant, traditionally the place of child bearing was in the family. Teenage motherhood was regarded as disgraceful and the only way a young-mother could redeem herself was to get married. Byaona & Kandji (1996) argued that culturally girls were expected to get married once they conceived.

In most Kenyan communities' ways of life and culture, men are favoured more than women. This is evident in the fact that all resources within the family and even within the society (including women and children) are under the control of male parents. Hence the decision making on whether the young mother should return to school or not was influenced by the interests of the fathers sometimes in consultation with elder sons if any. It is argued that the woman's role after bearing children is bringing the children up and obeying her husband.

Therefore, for the fathers of these young-mothers learners, their support was accompanied with restrictions and stern warnings.

As indicated elsewhere in this study, the babies' fathers denied responsibilities which meant that they did not provide either financial or social support for the children. The girls also said that it was hard for them to do self studies in the evening or at night because they did not have space and time to concentrate within the home environment.

Pillow, (2004; 117) has argued that "teens most impacted by teen pregnancy are young women who are already living in impoverished conditions prior to becoming pregnant."

The costs of school uniforms, fees and babysitting for their grandchildren, for example, have been argued by several studies to deter parents from sending girls to school. In addition Sey, (1997) points out that the need for girls' labour at home is considered one of the major constraints to girls' education whereby girls spend more time than boys on domestic chores, hence limiting time available for school assignments.

According to Stephens et al, (2007, cited in Kiptanui, Kindiki and Lelan, 2015; Mwaura & Wanyera, 2007) teenage mothers and their children are two particularly vulnerable groups in our society. Their long term lives are interconnected. With financial support, they may be shaped towards healthy development, stability and productivity. If the financial support is not adequate, they may be shaped towards being dependent for the rest of their lives (Kiptanui et al., 2015).

4.5 Stigmatization and Discrimination within the School, Home and the Neighbourhood

Stigmatization emerged as another major challenge that these young-mothers learners undergo once they decide to re-enter school. This comes from the teachers, fellow learners and the neighbourhood. The girls shared how sentiments and remarks from the teachers, pupils and neighbourhood society stigmatized them as follows:

PT1 "My teachers like telling me I am good only in making babies and should therefore leave schooling to those who are capable of performing. Pupils also gossip a lot and make very funny comments which are very disturbing. I just sometimes cry and avoid

company of any pupil at school. Some of my friends have been warned against being friends with me or associating with me by their parents. At home my father favours my other siblings in order to punish me for my mistake. He keeps reminding me of the mistake. It is true it was a mistake, but he does not have to keep on repeating it in my ears! It hurts me so much and I get stressed. When I go to fetch water in the borehole, neighbours always gossip and sometimes I am told to wait until all the 'good' girls have drawn water before I put my water container in the borehole. It is really stigmatizing and hurting."

PT2 "Some pupils in school and teachers make very hurting comments and I really feel down. My neighbours at home have also warned me not to visit their daughters as I will teach them my 'bad manners'. This is really stressing."

PT3 "Pupils in my former school were really bad. Teachers also did not help the situation as they kept on telling me that I was immoral. Even my home neighbours were also very hard on me. My father said I was a letdown to him and that I brought shame to him. At least since I came to this home, I feel better at home but in school, other learners are just bad."

PT4 "My parents and siblings were the first people to stigmatize me. They made me fear even for my life before I was rescued. Even today we are not in talking terms. Pupils at school who knew nothing of what had happened to me were also stressing me. Teachers were a bit understanding apart from those who thought that it was my fault that I became pregnant. At least here in the rescue village I feel secure but in school, some teachers and pupils are very annoying. This makes me feel very bad especially when they make funny comments or gossip about me."

Discussion

From the above information from the young-mothers learners, it is clear that young-motherhood is an unwelcome situation in many societies. They face stigma and discrimination from the spheres of life that matters to them namely the, school, family and the community.

Within the school environment, the teenage mother is seen as a "threat that has the potential to set off an epidemic of immoral and promiscuous behaviour" to other learners (Wanda 2006, p. 56). Teenage motherhood is also perceived as a social misfit and hence the stigmatization.

According to Runhare & Vandeyar (2012), stigma and discrimination by teachers is different and more complex. They contribute to the stereotypes describing these young-mothers learners as lazy, distracted, low-performing and also at risk of "contaminating other female classmates" with their behaviour.

Runhare & Vandeyar, (2012); Bhana et al., (2010) and Chigona & Chetty, (2007) argue that teachers are usually seen as people who are supposed to support and motivate girls to stay in school and perform well. However, this is contrary to the findings of this study. Most teachers were reported to have an attitude that made these young-mothers learners feel stigmatized by their situation as mothers in school. This again supports what Chigona & Chetty (2007) reported that hurtful comments may lead the adolescent mothers to feel isolated and not supported by others as reported elsewhere in this study.

From what the girls said, even their parents and siblings did not make them feel any better. Twenge, (2002) argues that the teenage mothers' close family members do not make things easier for them. Instead of the much needed support during those critical moments, they snap a judgment of immorality on them (Oyaro, 2008). The same treatment is extended to the young-mothers learners by peers who tease and taunt them once the rumour of pregnancy and motherhood start circulating (Wekesa, 2010). This leaves the girls with emotional scars that follow them to their adulthood.

I strongly support Wekesa (2010) since not all girls got pregnant because they were of loose morals. My argument is that before we judge these young-mothers whether in school or in the society with very harsh statements and reactions, we should first of all start by finding the circumstances leading to the pregnancy in the first case, as in the case of PT4.

The defilement and rape she underwent at the hands of the same person, who was supposed to ensure her protection, resulted to her being a young-mother. Where is she supposed to find protection if the society also rebukes her? Stigmatizing such a girl so as to warn others is surely nailing her on the cross for no fault of her own.

It is also argued that girls who become pregnant may be compelled to leave their parental home to preserve their family's reputation (as was the case of informants PT2, PT3 and PT4). This increases their vulnerability, including the risk of becoming homeless, living in extreme poverty and at risk of sexual exploitation or human trafficking (The Centre for Reproductive Rights, 2013). As a result of such public context, the society reflects the dynamics of stigma and discrimination which plays out in the private setting (the family) Unterhalter, (2013).

According to Shaw, (2010) girls' sexual experiences are viewed from a conservative approach to a liberal one by the society/community. From a Conservative approach, the society views

the pregnancy of young-mothers learners as a moral related issue. From a liberal approach, the society/community views it as a challenge to academic opportunities, financial independence and life choices.

Some stakeholders, like local political leaders in society argue that stigma is a preventive tool that shields other girls from falling into this unfortunate situation (GOK, 2009). According to Wekesa, (2010) it is insensitive, inhuman and does not help in any way. It only damages the ego and self-esteem of the young-mothers learners.

In Kenya, religion has also influenced the way the society view young-mothers who are not married (Ahleberge et al, 2009). In this sense, the institution of marriage is recognized for sexual expression and therefore, child bearing out of wedlock is looked down upon. Thus as a result, girls who get pregnant and become mothers while still in school are deemed to have violated this highly regarded norm. These girls are identified with an “immoral” tag. According to Furstenberg, (2003: p. 12), she is “irresponsible, out of control and in need of social constraints in the eyes of the society”. The insensitive labelling of teenage motherhood sends negative messages to teen mother’s self esteem (Chevalier & Viitanen, 2003).

The media is also to blame for participating in the stigmatization of these young-mothers learners. In this case I consider media as part of the society. As indicated in chapter two of this study, they do this by not highlighting the complex and troubling truths of teenage motherhood especially what they go through on a daily basis as they try to bring up their socially unwanted child (Lucker, 2010; Thembi 2012). Therefore they fail to portray a human face to teenage motherhood when they are expected to do so.

The media also presents teenage mothers on one hand as lacking in ambition in terms of their careers or their desire to become financially independent (Yardly, 2008) and on the other hand, good mothers who function as role models able to exercise control over their lives despite their ‘mistakes’ (Shaw, 2010).

Many authors describe adolescent-mothers in the United States (US) and United Kingdom (UK), as feeling strongly stigmatized by the media (Yardly, 2008; Achoka and Njeru, 2012; and Smith-Battle, 2013).

Smith-Battle, (2013); Van den Berg & Mamhute, (2013) argue that stigma and discrimination against pregnant and adolescent-mothers are common, not only because of their sexual

activity, but also due to school staff and peer attitude towards young-mothers learners. This may lead to these girls feeling unwanted, unwelcome and unaccepted.

Stigmatization and discrimination from parents, teachers and community is therefore a major factor that hinders parenting girls from continuing with their education Olunike, (2012).

4.6 Lack of support from school.

The study shows that the young-mother learners did not get enough support from school. They were actually not considered as learners with special educational needs. This lack of support from school emerged in the following sub-themes;

1. Lack of support from teachers
2. Lack of counselling to fight the stigma associated with teenage motherhood.

4.6.1 Lack of support from teachers

According to the informants, very few individual teachers were willing to help them go through what they had missed because of motherhood. Most teachers were not willing to help them with lessons missed out saying that they are paid to teach those who go to school and not those who stay at home no matter the reason. For instance a young-mother learner could be absent from school for some days because the baby was sick or had been admitted in hospital. When she resumed classes, teachers would not help her to learn what she had missed during her absence. The following were responses from the participants when asked about the help they get from teachers to cover up the missed lessons.

PT1: "Only one teacher I can say is supportive. The rest are bad. They do not care whether you understand what you have copied from your friends. You ask a teacher a question if you did not understand and they abuse you, yet they help others who miss out but they do not have children. So I stopped asking. One teacher remarked that instead of wasting my father's money by being in and out of school, I better get married. May be I will be useful in a husband's home than being in school and will not go beyond primary school."

PT2: "When I miss school, because either I am taking my baby to the clinic or there is no-one at home to stay with her, I do not get any help from the teachers when I get back to school. I have to find my own ways of catching up with what I missed. You ask teachers and they tell you that you ask your classmates. One teacher actually told me off and argued that she cannot waste her energy on someone who will not even perform in the examinations. She better just chat in the staffroom or read newspapers instead of wasting time explaining to me

some things that I will not keep in my mind because I am thinking of children. These teachers can really demoralize!”

PT3: “If it means missing out lessons, the teachers are not willing to go through the whole teaching process again with me. They say that they have too many books to mark, so they have no time for extra tuition and if I want extra tuition I should pay for it. They say that my missing out on what is taught is the price I pay for being irresponsible and allowing myself to become a mother before my time. Yet, they readily help others who may have missed school because of other reasons”.

PT4: “One time my child was really sick and had to miss school for twelve days. When I resumed school, the first thing the class teacher told me was to make sure I have all the notes that were written when I was away. The teacher gave me only two days to do that, failure to which I would be punished. I also had to read them on my own and understand. It was difficult for me to catch up with all that I had missed and copying the notes for all the subjects. When I went to some of the subjects teachers to ask for explanations on what I did not understand, they were very rude and made very negative remarks. One commented in front of the class that I should have thought twice before getting myself into parenthood and concentrated with my education. So they are not supportive”.

4.6.2 Lack of counselling to fight stigma associated with teenage motherhood.

Another issue that emerged during the interview was counselling to help the young-mothers learners cope or fight stigma that is always associated with teenage pregnancy and motherhood. During the interviews the girls pointed out that stigma was a very big challenge to them. They did not know how to fight it. They said that their situation as young-mothers in school stigmatized them and they sometimes felt out of place. This was especially so when teachers and other learners in the school intimidated them because of them being young-mothers. The following were the responses on the issue of counselling to fight the stigma from two of the participants:

PT1: “Nobody ever talked to me or counselled me. Even the teachers did not bother counselling me as an individual after I went back to school. The stigma was always too much to bear but all the same I am trying to persevere, at least I do my Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) and get out of here.”

PT2 “No teacher ever talked to me about how to deal with my situation and what I was going through or even what I went through during labour and birth process. Even to date, no counselling has ever been done on a personal or individual level by any teacher. Some of these teachers cannot even counsel you as they are part of those who stigmatize you more by the way they handle you in class or in school as a whole.”

For two of the participants living in the Rescue Village, they had this to say:

PT3 “I was counselled by the social worker who is employed here (the Rescue village). She counselled me during my pregnancy when I moved in here and even after delivery. She helped me a lot and I was able to accept myself and my new identity as a mother. She also counselled me and other girls before we re-entered school. She asked us to try and act calmly even when we are intimidated because of our situation and new identity as young mothers.

However, in school, neither teachers nor the members from the school management committee have ever done any counselling to me. They instead contribute to the stigmatization with their rude and sometimes careless remarks.”

PT4: “Apart from the counselling we received from the social worker and the director here in the village, at school no teacher has ever bothered to counsel me so far. Teachers do not care about what we go through as learners who are also young-mothers. They argue that we are paying for our sins of being immoral.

Even in church, no one cares about my situation, and so no one has ever talked with me or counselled me to deal with the stigma associated with young-motherhood.”

Discussion

Lack of support from the school environment that is the school administration, teachers and even other learners are clear indications that the young-mothers learners are not welcome in the school learning environment. Teachers also forget that the policy allows young-mothers to re-enter school after child birth and when they feel they are ready to re-enter.

According to Maluli & Bali (2014), though there are policies for re-entry to schooling, they are not consistently applied to schools either because of lack of knowledge at district and the school levels, or because there are no context-specific decisions made about their application.

Mpanza & Nzima, (2010) argue that teachers are often unprepared to deal with pregnant girls and young-mother learners in the class. They may see the young-mother learners as adults who do not fit in within the school environment (Shaningwa 2007).

Teachers, it is assumed, should help these young-mother learners who are undergoing such situations and difficulties. Unfortunately, some teachers consider the young-mothers learners' situation as none of their concern and a private matter (Olivier, 2000).

Bhana et al, (2010) argue that even if teachers would like to support and help these young-mothers learners to achieve better results, they feel unable to offer additional lessons missed

because of absence of school structures for parenting learners. This could be the reason why all the four participants said they were never given any extra teaching to cover what they had missed when they had to stay away from school looking after their children.

As noted in chapter two, some teachers lack professionalism and are not empathetic to the young-mothers learners' situations (Bloem, 2000).

According to Morrell et al. (2012), school support is a crucial factor in determining whether the young-mother learners are able to continue their education or not. The willingness of the school administration to accommodate and support teenage mothers is a primary consideration (Kiptanui, Kindiki & Lelan 2015).

Onyeka et al, (2011) argue that in some contexts, the reality of many such girls is that they are being excluded from school as a consequence of getting pregnant or as a sign of sexual activity before or outside of marriage which is unacceptable. They are also not considered as learners with special educational needs yet they fall under the category of vulnerable group of learners (Mwaura & Wanyera, 2007). Therefore teachers do not make any effort to assist them in their learning.

According to the girls, they are probably being marginalized because of their situation considering that some said that other learners got help when they missed school.

On counselling, the study findings show that two of the young-mothers learners who went back to school never went through any counselling process to help them cope with not only stigma but the whole life situation of parenthood and schooling simultaneously. For the other two, they were lucky. However, all the four girls said that they never got any counselling from teachers in their schools.

The Kenya re-entry policy also recommends counselling for girls after they return to school (Omwancha, 2012). According to Olunike, (2012) girls who are also young-mothers are hindered from continuing successfully with their education as they lack support from teachers, peers and even the society at large. Such support includes being counselled so that they can be able to accept themselves and adjust to school life. This would enable them to concentrate with their studies without feeling that they are being isolated.

Informal talks with one of the head teachers where one of the informants is a learner confirmed that there was no provision for professional counselling to the young-mother learners. This was because hiring a professional counsellor would incur expenses that are never factored in during the budgeting of school projects. Furthermore, the head teacher explained, the government's grants to schools are barely enough to meet the school's other needs. He cannot therefore divert the money meant for school improvement of infrastructure to issues like hiring of professional counsellors.

He considered hiring of professional counselling services for the young-mother learner as a responsibility of the old parent. As for the teachers, he was quick to defend them on why they might have failed to counsel the young-mother learner. He said that he had few teachers with a very big number of pupils to handle, thus a heavy work load. He said that lack of time due to the heavy work load might have made the teachers fail to offer even basic counselling to the young-mother learner in this school.

The head teacher seemed to be ignorant of the NSH policy and the school Re-entry policy. The NSH Policy (2009: 23-24) clearly indicates that *"....counselling services shall be available to the teen mothers including re-emphasis on life skills for avoidance of future unplanned pregnancies"* (p 23-24). In the school re-entry policy (1994) as cited in CSA (2008: 45), states that *"...intensive guidance and counselling should be provided to the affected girl, her parent, teachers and other girls in the school."* In the same policy, it further states that *"Girls in the school should be counselled on consequences of irresponsible sexual behaviour, adolescent sexuality, boy/girl relationships, negative peer influences, building of self-confidence and self-esteem."* Therefore the implementers of these policies should be questioned why they are never adhered to.

According to Smith-Battle, (2013) only allowing teenage mothers back to school does not help them succeed in the secondary education but there is need to prepare teenage mothers for schooling and mothering before they return to school.

4.6.3 Lack of enough support from parents and the community

The communities within which the young-mothers learners lived had a big impact on their lives. Instead of supporting these young-mothers learners to complete their schooling

successfully, the communities discouraged the girls from attending school. The community treated them as girls without morals for engaging in sexual activities which is considered a thing for the adults. As a result the girls interviewed said that some community members did not like to see them learning together or associating with other girls in the same class or school. According to the girls, that was the reason for seeking re-entry in other schools other than the ones they were before becoming mothers. These were their experiences;

PT1: “Though I am in school, I do not feel very comfortable using some short cut routes while going to school. This is because of the sarcastic remarks that some community members make when I am passing. Some have warned their daughters and other relatives who are girls to avoid my company. I have heard some women castigating their daughters asking them ‘you want to become pregnant and a mother at your age like so and so?’ referring to me. I feel bad and hurt. I cannot even visit some of my friends in their homes as their parents do not want me to associate with their daughters. The head teacher was even questioned why he allowed me in school and he knew very well I was a mother.”

PT 2: “My father said that I can go back to school but not in our village where I was schooling before as I had ashamed him. Moreover, the community around did not want to have me schooling in the same class with their daughters as they said I would teach them my bad manners”.

PT3: “The community I lived in before joining this home was very hostile and did not want me to continue going to the same school as they said I would influence other girls. As for my parents, they never even come to visit me here during the visiting days even when they are informed by the director.”

PT4: “If I had not come to this rescue home, I would not have continued with my education because my parents and the community were very unsupportive. The head master was once asked by a member of the school committee to expel me from school as I was immoral and would influence other girls. As for my parents, they never talk to me or even come to visit me here. We do not communicate and I only get support from the director and the caregivers here.”

Discussion

From the above findings, it can be concluded that most teachers are not supportive of these young-mothers learners. The negative remarks and unwillingness to help them shows that they are deliberately isolating these young-mothers learners because of their situation.

Parents, some teachers and other members of the community also discouraged other girls from associating with the young-mothers learners arguing that they were a negative influence to them. The findings support Wanyama & Simatwa, (2011) who assert that pupils shunned

young-mothers learners when they attempted to socialize with them. This was as a result of being warned against associating with the young-mothers by their parents and community at large.

Girls who become pregnant may also be compelled to leave their parental home to preserve their family's reputation (The Centre for Reproductive Rights, 2013). This was the case with informants PT2, PT3 and PT4. This increases their vulnerability, including the risk of becoming homeless, living in extreme poverty and at risk of sexual exploitation or human trafficking.

Breheny & Stephens, (2007) argue that motherhood is a challenge requiring support and community involvement regardless of the mother's age and social economic position. They further propose that different social structures could be used to support motherhood occurring at any point in the life course so that motherhood could be successfully combined with education and employment in any order.

The study findings support Smith-Battle, (2013) who argues that there is lack of consistent support for teenage mothers from their families. As indicated earlier, the fact that the young-mothers learners have to miss lessons in order to look after their babies is of less concern to her parents/guardians because she had a baby while still very young and has to face the consequences.

In addition to that, Pearton, (1999) also argues that adolescents are mostly too young and emotionally immature when they first get pregnant, hence if these girls are to succeed academically, it is important to provide support.

4.7 Adjusting to motherhood and balancing the triple roles of learner, daughter and mother

In almost all cultural settings in Kenya and probably the whole of Africa women and girls' roles are defined. These roles shape the way individuals live their daily lives within the family as well as within the wider community. The experiences of the young-mothers learners who participated in this research reveal that their roles as learners, daughters and mothers, co-existed simultaneously. These roles sometimes conflicted.

As learners they had to balance their time so that they fulfil demanding school obligations. As young unmarried mothers, living under the authority of their parents/guardians/caregivers meant that they had to fulfil their socially prescribed duties/roles of daughters in the home. They also struggled with parenting their babies with little support. They said that adapting their life plans to the changes brought by the arrival of their babies was challenging. There were challenges to the adjustment in their identities too. All the four young-mothers learners said it was very difficult for them but they were trying their best to balance the three roles.

Though they all acknowledged that they had positive thoughts and hopes for a better future, it was evident from their views that they required more support and a longer adjustment period before they could start planning about their future and those of their babies. When asked how they balanced the triple roles, and adjusted to the new roles of motherhood they had this to say:

PT1 “It is not easy being a mother at my age. I still didn’t know what I was expected to do or react when the baby kept on crying even after breastfeeding. Though my mother would sometimes help in identifying the causes of the constant and persistent cries, it was still not easy for me. Even now, it is still hard especially when I have to miss school when he is sick I also have to miss school when my mother has other things to attend to far away from home and nobody can look after my child. I feel like I want to run far away and leave him there crying, but on second thought, I attend to him.

When I go back to school after missing classes for maybe two or three days, teachers are always very harsh and do not want to hear any reason for my absence. Sometimes the teachers are very abusive saying that I should make my own school at home so that I can attend at the time of my choice. This really hurts me. In the evenings, I cannot wait for the compulsory evening preps as I have to rush home to do the household chores. If only I knew this would be such a bother and a distraction of my life, I would not have become pregnant”.

PT2: “I would say life after giving birth has been very stressing. My aunt stays with my child during the weekdays, but I have to do other household chores. During weekends, she says I have to be responsible for everything in the home and also my child. When my aunt has to attend the women group meetings or want to go and sell the fish at the beach, I have to miss class and be with my child at home. At such times I feel so confused and do not know what to do.

According to my aunt, there is nothing I do correctly. Instead of her correcting me in a calm and polite way, she is always abusive and sometimes tells me very harsh words that make me feel bad. I know I made a mistake by becoming a mother while still in school, but she should forgive and accept that it happened. She does not guide me on how I can adjust to the role of motherhood. Sometimes I see as if the child is a burden to me and everyone else in

the home.....because many times when I arrive home from school, I cannot even sit down and rest a bit, my aunt just puts the child on my laps and says “chukua mzigo wako, ulitafuta mwenyewe” (meaning, take your burden, you looked for it yourself). But I am grateful that she offered to look after my baby while i go back to school”.

For the young-mothers learners in the Rescue Village home, they simultaneously balanced the triple roles of learners, daughters in the “Village” and as mothers to their children. During the baby clinic days, they have to take them to hospital and therefore they miss attending school. Though they complained that it was very demanding for them to balance the three roles, they can be said to be the lucky ones among the other participants. This is because they usually received some guidance on how to be good mothers and adjust to the new roles of motherhood.

This was confirmed by the director who said that she could not afford caregivers’ services at night. The director said that as much as she would like to treat them like learners, they were still mothers and had a responsibility of caring for their children in every aspect. The girls have to perform the home and motherly duties when they went home from school in the evenings.

Discussion

The analysis of the experiences of the young-mothers learners reveal that adjusting to motherhood and balancing the triple roles came at a high cost. This was so especially for the young-mothers learners from households without adequate female labour to support the roles reserved for women and young girls. For those in the Rescue Village, as indicated above, they could count on the generosity of the director who employs caregivers. They could also rely on other pregnant girls in the home to look after their babies while they attended school.

However, in the evenings the burden falls on their shoulders.

Nyambura ,(2000 cited in Okwany, 2004) states that women’s lives do not fall into time mediated compartments of girl, sister, mother, but these may overlap and co-exist through her life. It is argued that each of these roles that they had taken on had material and some ideological dimensions (Agarwal, 1997). These dimensions dictate proper behaviour for the young-mothers learners, as learners, “daughters”, and as well as mothers.

As learners, they had to adhere to the strict and rigid school routine and calendar. They were also expected to perform and compete with peers in their classes or be forced to repeat. This is

very common in Kenyan schools though it goes against the Government's policy. As 'good' daughters, they had to help in the housework as this was one way of preparing them for their future role as wives. As mothers, they had to ensure that their children's needs were met. These roles often conflicted especially when the young-mothers learners reported that they had to miss school to attend to their sick children or had to take them for post-natal clinics or for vaccinations.

The young-mothers learners as well as their parents/guardians deemed schooling not as an entitlement but as an option that could be considered only when there was adequate female labour. This comes even when the Constitution of Kenya is clear on the right to education for all children.

Maluli & Bali (2014) argue that girls who return to school often lack the support they need to manage their double responsibilities as learners and as mothers. Theron & Dunn (2006), assert that as teen mothers, they are expected to be mothers and learners simultaneously. These are huge responsibilities for a teenager who is still developing psychologically.

In order to balance these roles, mature, adult decisions are required of these emotionally pressured adolescents. This is because devoting adequate time to school work and managing to care for the infant are great challenges for the parenting teens (Arlington Public School, 2004).

Wekesa (2010) cites roles of being a girl-learner, a mother and a daughter carried out simultaneously to be placing a great burden to the young-mothers learners thus compromising their performance as learners.

4.8 Lack of confident parenting and interaction with the baby

Confidence as a parent was related to adjustment to motherhood, as these young-mothers learners gained confidence in their abilities over time. The lack of confidence in their parenting skills was a challenge to them. This could have been compounded by unhelpful relationships with their parents/guardians or even extended family members. This therefore indicates that parenting support should come from different sources to ensure a well balanced

support system that accounts for age, culture and tradition, as well as personal experiences. Asked about the issue of confidence in their parenting, they had this to say:

PT1 “Since it is my own baby, I have to take everything to heart. What people say especially coming from your relatives really hurts a lot. My father sometimes cannot stand any slight mistake I make. He abuses me and keeps on reminding me that I have a ‘burden’ in his house. Sometimes when I cannot feed the baby well, my mother also abuses me and tells me to learn how to do it because that is my problem and not hers”. I feel helpless and I pity my child especially when he keeps on crying when he is hungry or sick.’

PT2 “I didn’t know how to hold the baby while bathing her as she was very small. In fact one day she almost drowned in the basin of water while I was bathing her. I trembled and up to now, I fear bathing her. My aunt sometimes refuses to bathe her and tells me it is my child so I do it. I have no confidence in how I sometimes handle my baby. I even don’t know what I should do or not do for the baby.

PT3 “At first I had a certain fear on how to be a good mother to my child. I did not understand how I should handle him especially when he cried a lot. The care giver is only with the child during the day. From evening, throughout the night and on weekends, it’s my duty. Sometimes I would be nervous when he cried at night and I would walk from my room to the night caregiver to ask her what I should do. I was never confident in handling him alone whenever he cried, but now things are different.

PT4 “I have now gained a little confidence in my parenting due to the support given by madam director and the house- mothers. My roommate is also of great help. She is older than me and her child is also big. She helps me a lot at night and the caretaker is not around. When the baby cries, she advises me on how to check if he is sick, or has any discomfort.

It was also evident from the young-mother learners that the role of parenting drained them emotionally. They are still immature adolescents who need support. As such, their lack of confidence in their parenting role appeared to be significant factor that would contribute to the young-mothers’ likelihood of seeking emotional support and adjustment to their parenting role. They shared their experiences as follows:

PT1 “I have now learnt that even if you try to say something, nobody cares about what you are trying to say, so I just keep to myself and learn my parenting skills through trial and error methods. However, when I take the child for clinical checkups and weighing, I interact with other young mothers and share with them my fears on parenting and how to overcome them. Older mothers at the clinic are also very helpful”.

PT2 “My aunt actually think I am the worst mother she has ever come across. She doesn’t think I am young and still learning about parenting. Therefore when I attend the

child's clinic day I ask the attending nurses about things I am not sure about baby upbringing and the health of my baby".

PT4 "My being a mother is stressing and when I fail to calm my baby when he cries, I feel troubled. Sometimes I ask myself so many questions and no answers. However, with the help I get from the caregiver, I can manage though it is stressing but I love my child very much".

Discussion

Though new motherhood brings joy and surprises to mothers, the same could not be said for these young-mother learners at first. The sleepless nights and changes to one's body were things they never thought would be the results of motherhood. The study findings show that young-mothers learners face numerous challenges that place demands not only on the young-mothers learners' stage of adolescent development, but also the ability to adapt to the obligations of motherhood. As noted in the literature, young-mothers are faced with meeting the needs of their infants as well as seeking ways to satisfy their own needs as adolescents. They need support from peers who understand and can identify with their new role as parents. This provides them with a sense of acceptance, socialization and stability (De Vito, 2010). Brady et al, (2012) argue that teenage mothers do not have the emotional and intellectual maturity that is needed to provide for another life and this poses a danger to both the young-mother and her child.

From these findings it can be seen that these young-mothers learners are trying hard to learn the best they can on how to be good parents. According to Nystrom & Ohrling, (2004) many of the teenage mothers said that caring for their newborns was the most challenging responsibility that they have ever faced. A study in Swaziland reported similar challenges experienced by adolescent mothers (Kaufman, et al ,2000). Similar findings have been reported in South Africa (Dlamini, 2002). In this regard, they need all the support they can get in order to improve on their parenting skills.

Logdson & Koniak-Griffin, (2005) argue that adolescents who have given birth have increased needs for emotional, material and informational support. This support is not always given especially when they are viewed as immoral girls. This potentially makes the challenges associated with parenting worse. Moreover, young-mothers learners may also feel that they are being alienated from their peers due to their changed role. However despite the challenges, it can be noted that some young-mothers learners would ask for help when they

were overwhelmed by the parenting roles. This fact supports what Paschal et al (2011) said as noted in chapter two.

4.9 4.8 Coping with the challenges.

The young-mothers learners realized that they had a responsibility to bring up their babies. They also realized that if they are to provide a good life for their children, then they had to find their own ways of coping with the challenges that they were facing. Therefore they had to be in school to get an academic qualification which could help them get a job.

However, schools influenced by the society's cue have in some cases made these young-mothers learners feel like outcasts and perceived them as unfit schooling subject. The study found out that the young-mothers learners manifested their resistance to this isolation and prejudice in the following ways:

1. Keeping the pregnancy invisible;
2. Skipping some school days and reacting to teachers' prejudices.

4.9.1 Keeping pregnancy invisible

Because the society did not like seeing the young-mothers learners with big tummies in school when they were pregnant, some girls resulted to hiding their pregnancies so that nobody could notice them as they felt ashamed and they were also afraid to be seen by their teachers and peers. The young-mothers learners had this to say as a way of coping with the shame of wearing emphasizing school uniform:

PT1: "When my stomach started growing very big, I borrowed a hijab from one of my friends who is a Muslim after I cheated her that I had converted to Islam religion and that my parents did not have money to buy me one. So I would wear my usual school uniform and did not button the skirt and then I used the Hijab to hide the stomach. The hijab was long enough to cover me up to the thigh level so that no one could see the stomach".

PT2: "I used an oversize blouse and would not tuck it in. This way, not many people noted my pregnancy until almost when I was about to give birth".

PT3: "I used to hide my big tummy with a friend's Hijab or just let my big blouse hang over the school skirt. I used to wear the blouse which belonged to my roommate who was not schooling".

PT4: *“Though my stomach was not that big, I still tried to hide it by not setting in my blouse and that way not many people could notice that I was pregnant though some parents suspected and would ask the school headmaster why he was allowing pregnant girls in school”.*

4.9.2 Skipping some schooldays and reacting to teachers' prejudices.

The young-mothers learners said they got fed up with the nagging and the prejudices of the teachers. Therefore, they sometimes decided to skip school.

This is how they articulated their feelings on this matter:

PT1 *“Sometimes you feel like the world is coming to an end and need to stay away from people who hate you. So sometimes I would skip school and stay at home. Even now when teachers and other learners mock me because I have a baby, I sometimes stay away from school for some time to be able to calm down”*

PT2: *“I felt like everyone was against me and so sometimes I would fake sickness and stay away from school. Sometimes the teachers' embarrassed me in front of the class. I would talk back and they thought I am being rude yet I was the one on the wrong for being in school when I was pregnant. I felt ashamed and guilty and would skip school for some days or even a week”*

PT3: *“It is bad when other learners laugh at your situation because you are mother in class. You can fight them or ignore them. But what about when teachers make you look bad in front of the whole school and you cannot fight them? You just avoid going to school for some time.”*

PT4: *“Some teachers in school who did not know what happened always made me feel like I am the subject of their introduction to a lesson whenever they entered the class. When it was too much, I could skip going to school and hide in the bush because I could not stay at home either. Even now I skip Math's classes most of the times because the teacher always picks on me. Yet I do not understand Mathematics and she does not help me. So I feel tired of all the harassments from the teacher, I stay away from school”.*

Discussion

According to cultural values, pregnant women are not expected to dress in a way that emphasizes their big tummies. Cultural norms refer to culture as a way of life of members of a society, or groups within that society (Giddens, 2001). It includes how people dress, their

marriage customs and family life, their patterns of work, religious ceremonies and leisure pursuit.

Women, who do not adhere to the dressing code while pregnant, not only embarrass themselves, but rather embarrass the rest of the community. The young-mothers learners in this study were no exceptions to the cultural norms of the society they lived in.

Young-mothers learners, by dressing in school uniform which by design emphasizes the growing body contravened this code. Unfortunately, the school emphasized that every learner must be in school uniform when in school at all times. Therefore, changing the school uniform design to for example a maternity gown/mother dress which could be socially and culturally accepted disqualified the dress as a school uniform. As such the pregnant teens had to be in school uniform which made them be ridiculed on their way to school.

Teachers embarrassed these young-mothers learners because they had prejudice against them. The embarrassment which the teachers caused on these young- mothers learners due to ridiculing them in front of their fellow learners seemed to weigh them down and had a big impact on them as learners. This affected their class participation and learning.

It was noted that the young-mothers learners at some point would feel fed up and resisted the teachers' use of judgmental language in the presence of their fellow learners and spoke back. Unfortunately, teachers usually misinterpreted the young-mothers learners' responses to be rudeness and as being problem learners who were not worthy empathizing with. According to Luttrell ,(2003), he observed that the regulation of proper conduct for girls in their condition (and the girls' resistance to regulation) was a recurring source of conflict between the teachers and teen mothers (young mothers). In addition, because of being labelled as rude and having problems, they felt oppressed.

4.10 Summary of the findings

The study interviewed four young-mothers learners who had re-entered school after childbirth. Two of these participants were from two public primary schools while the other two were from a "Rescue Village" home.

The results show that young-mothers learners undergo a lot of challenges and stressful situations as they try to achieve their academic goals. These challenges start as soon as they realize that they are pregnant.

The findings revealed circumstances that led to their being pregnant and found that these circumstances were the leading causes of all the challenges that they have been encountering. Though girls may get pregnant for various reasons, this study found four main circumstances as factors that contributed to their being pregnant. The study found the leading causes of pregnancy to be; lack of sex education, adolescence sexual experiences, transactional sex and sexual violence and abuse.

After the young-mothers learners discovered they were pregnant, their reaction was that of shock, fear, anxiety and confusion. They viewed their pregnancy as a shameful occurrence and a sudden stumbling block to their education. They also said it was an unplanned occurrence.

Their parents reacted with deep shock, anger, feelings of being hurt and let down by their daughters and they felt that the girls had ashamed them in the eyes of the society. The men responsible for their pregnancies reacted by rejecting the young-mothers learners and denying responsibilities.

The school (teachers and other learners) intimidated, stigmatized and discriminated against the young-mothers learners from the time they heard that the girls were pregnant. The stigma and discrimination continued after re-entry to formal schooling. Other learners in the school also gossiped about the young-mothers learners' situation. These reactions made the girls feel isolated and unwanted.

The community viewed the young-mothers learners' situations as a social disgrace and they did not want the young-mothers learners to be in the same schools with their daughters. They felt that the young-mothers learners would influence other girls in the school to become pregnant. They said that the girls would "contaminate" other girls in school with their behaviour.

The study found that young-mothers learners undergo a lot of challenges in the three environments namely the school, home and the community. The main challenges were summarized as follows: household factors, cultural norms and poverty, stigmatization and

discrimination; lack of support from school, home and community; adjusting to motherhood and balancing the triple roles of learner, daughter and mother; and lack of confident parenting and interaction with the baby.

Strategies employed by the young-mothers learners to cope with their pregnancies and against prejudice were found to include keeping the pregnancy invisible and skipping some school days in order for them to calm down.

5 CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1.1 Conclusion

The study was exploring the challenges that young-mothers learners face after re-entry into formal schooling. Young-mothers learners also referred to as young-mothers, teenage or adolescent mothers in this study face numerous challenges as they try to balance their roles as learners and as young-mothers. These challenges manifest themselves from the time they discover they are pregnant, through childbirth process and after re-entering formal primary schooling.

The main reasons that led to their pregnancies could not be ignored as they were the causes of all the challenges that the young-mothers learners were experiencing as indicated in the chapter above. Their ability to adapt to the obligations of parenthood and the need to acquire education were something that these young-mothers learners took as part of their life though they faced these challenges.

From the findings of the study, it can be concluded that parents' attitude and the economic status of the families of the young-mothers learners have an impact on their schooling. The parents were reported to have become angry upon knowing that their daughters were indeed pregnant at their age. In some cases this anger resulted in the girls getting away from the family home and finding solace in rescue homes which they now refer to as their 'home'. The anger also resulted in communication breakdown as some of the participants confirmed never to have had any connections with their immediate family members upon leaving home.

The economic status of the families played a role both in some girls becoming pregnant, and hindering the girls from participating successfully in the academic world. The need for basic essentials that an adolescent girl would obviously need drove some of the participants in engaging in transactional sex, hence becoming pregnant. On the other hand, lack of financial support from the family to meet their own individual needs and those of their babies, made

them lose concentration. This affected the way they performed in class. They worried so much on how they were going to provide for their babies' upkeep and meet their own needs.

The young-mothers learners chose to continue with their schooling because they consider academic qualifications as a ticket to participate in the labour market. They all said that they wanted to earn a decent living to be able to provide for their babies.

Their dismal performance in their academic world was found to be as a result of reduced hours of study both at home and in school. This again was due to the fact that the families' economic status could not afford to hire full time baby caregivers so that the young-mother learners could attend school uninterrupted. Though they wanted to complete their primary education and proceed to higher levels, some participants were in dilemma on how they would meet the cost of secondary education. It can therefore be argued that poverty will play a major role in ensuring whether the girls proceed to higher level or will terminate their education at the primary school level. If the latter is the case, then the vicious cycle of poverty will be replayed in the lives of their babies and the trend continues as argued by other studies.

According to the findings of this study, it may be argued that the young-mothers learners lacked enough support from their homes, school and the community. They felt that the lack of much needed support was hindering them from completing school successfully and proceed to acquire higher education that will enable them compete in the labour market.

Instead of the young-mothers learners getting support from the three environments (school, home and community), they get misunderstanding and pressure, stigma and discrimination and social isolation.

The young-mothers learners fall under the vulnerable group of children and as such should be handled as learners with special educational needs in an inclusive setting. They do not have emotional maturity to deal with their situation. However due to the degree of ignorant shown by the three environments, it is really hard for these young-mothers learners to compete favourably upon their re-entry to formal schooling.

It is very unfortunate that some teachers do not understand the young-mothers' situation as learners with special educational needs and they expect the young-mothers learners to perform and behave just like any other learner in their respective classrooms. They have to adhere to the rigid curriculum and school set rules as learners. At home they have to take on

the responsibilities of being mothers to their babies as well as serve as daughters in the home as required by traditions and culture. Balancing all these roles is really hard for them considering that they are emotionally immature adolescents.

Their problems come when they have to miss school because they have to take care of their babies, for instance when the babies are sick, hospitalized or the caregiver is unavailable. Learners both with and without children or both boys and girls may miss school for any legitimate or illegitimate reason. While it can be argued that the responsibility of catching up with the rest of the learners rests with the learner herself/himself, some teachers were found not to be willing to assist when these vulnerable young-mother learners were unable to make connections with the existing knowledge just because they were busy taking care of their babies. This made the girls feel excluded in the learning process.

While it may be assumed that teachers would be at the forefront to support and encourage these young-mothers learners to deal with their situation, which makes them learners with special educational needs, the said teachers were the first to castigate them.

Young-mothers learners are also misunderstood and pressured by their fellow learners. Ridicule, labelling and name calling from their fellow learners both boys and girls, resulted in discomfort in school. This in return affected their self-esteem and ability to concentrate with their learning. As a result, it affected their performance.

This study also identified other challenges that the young-mothers learners experienced. These were stigma and discrimination, lack of counselling to fight the stigma, adjustment to motherhood as well as lack of confidence in their parenting and interaction with their babies.

The study also explored on how the young-mothers learners coped with the challenges. They hid their pregnancy by wearing over sized clothes. They felt that by so doing, they would stop those who were gossiping about their situations. The young-mothers learners also skipped some school days especially when the stigma, ridicule and other challenges overwhelmed them. This, they argued was a way of calming down as some situations were beyond their control

The challenges and experiences highlighted can be used probably as a gauge to dig out more of what the girls go through once they re-enter school after child birth.

5.1.2 Recommendations

It is evident that the roles of parenting for the young-mothers learners drain them emotionally, physically, economically and even socially. However, solutions to the holistic challenges of the young-mothers learners and other adolescent mothers cannot be found in the activities of a single individual or service.

The solutions can only be found through the coordinated efforts of multidisciplinary and intersectional teams. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made, which would go a long way in removing the barriers that hinder normal participation to education by those young-mothers who re-enter formal primary schooling;

- The study recommends that the Ministry of Education (MOE) implore on the head teachers to implement the Re-Entry Policy in full in all schools in the area and Kenya in general. This will ensure that the rights of the child as enshrined in the constitution are respected and adhered to.
- The head teachers should consider setting up responsive guidance and counselling programs to support the young-mothers learners from the time they are discovered to be pregnant up to the time they re-enter school after child birth. This will make them feel accepted and build a high self-esteem which will enable them cope with learning.
- Counselling should also be done to the parents of the girls as stipulated in the re-entry policy. By so doing, they may be able to support their daughters during the challenging stages of parenthood and take care of their grandchildren.
- Teachers might be in need of guidance and/or sensitization with respect to how they encourage and support young-mothers learners academically. They need some training in the field of Special Needs Education (SNE) so that they can understand the special educational needs for this vulnerable group of learners. This way, they will be able to understand and guide them appropriately and accord them the assistance and support they need.
- There is need to create awareness among the current learners in all schools not just in the area the study was conducted but Kenya in general, about the importance of the re-entry policy for the young-mothers. Sensitization about the policy was likely to make

other learners understand more about the policy and therefore appreciate and support the young-mothers who re-enter school. It would also encourage the young-mothers learners and bring change of attitudes towards educating girls. Sensitization would also make the many out of school young/adolescent mothers take advantage of the policy and re-enter schooling after child birth.

- It is also important to create awareness and sensitization of the policy among all communities and other stakeholders of education in order to recognize the rights of the girls and appreciate the importance of educating girls.
- Teenagers should be taught assertive interpersonal skills development, such as negotiating and refusal skills in programs that allow young people to practice these skills. Special programs should be initiated in by government and the various responsible departments to address ignorance concerning sexual matters, and the challenges and risks associated with pregnancy and parenting by adolescents. Parenting techniques should be taught in sex education programmes.
- The stakeholders in the ministry of education in collaboration with the ministry of health should introduce health nurses in schools. The roles of the nurses to include: providing information on pregnancy and its risks; contraceptives use; abortion and its complications; and the early child birth and its consequences. There is need for health workers to focus on high risk groups and high risk behaviour.
- There is need to change the discourse of young motherhood which is stigmatizing and insensitive to that of hope and admiration. However this is not to say we should condone teenage motherhood, but deal with it to yield positive results.
- Finally, stiff penalties should be handed to those men who sexually defile or rape and impregnate underage girls. They should also be forced to provide financial support and other maintenance costs for upbringing the child.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A: Current policy Guidelines

Excerpts of the school return policy passed in 1994

Girls who become pregnant should be admitted back to school unconditionally. Head teachers, District and Municipal Education officers should assist such girls to be re-admitted to other schools to avoid psychological and emotional suffering.

Intensive guidance and counselling should be provided to the affected girl, parents, teachers and other girls in the school.

Once a girl is sent home, the parents should be summoned to the school to receive some counselling after which they should take their daughter home. Head teachers and other teachers should exercise understanding when handling cases of this nature.

The school to keep in touch with such girls and their families so as to monitor what is happening and provide the necessary moral and spiritual support. Counselling for both the girl and her parents should not be discontinued.

The parents should seek readmission of their daughter to school as soon as the baby is weaned. Head teachers should provide the necessary help in this regard. In case of any problem, the provincial, District and the Municipal Education Officers should assist.

Other girls in the school should be counselled on consequences of irresponsible sexual behaviour, adolescent sexuality, boy/girl relationships, negative peer influences, building self-confidence and the self-esteem.

Those who make girls pregnant should be exposed. For example teachers and other male adults in the community should face legal action. Boys should be given counselling so that they can take responsibility for their actions.

NB: The roles which were played by the provincial administration are now devolved following review and promulgation of a new Constitution in Kenya. As such there are no Provincial Education Officers but rather we have County Directors of Education in all the forty seven counties in Kenya. So the roles of the former played are now played by the latter.

Source: M.O.E 1998(cited in CSA 2008).

APPENDIX B: Current Health Policy Guidelines

Excerpts of the National School Health Policy 2009: Teenage Pregnancy in School

- Girls will undergo voluntary medical screening once per term;
- A pregnant female learner shall be allowed to continue with classes for as long as possible;
- Both the student and her parents shall be counselled on the importance of ensuring good outcome of the pregnancy by attending Ante-Natal Clinic and ensuring safe delivery, and the possibilities of continuing with education after delivery;
- Efforts shall be made to get information on the circumstances leading to pregnancy and about the other party involved. A children's officer shall be informed
- Action, including legal action will be taken if the father of the unborn child is an adult (over 18 years). Child-fathers (boys less than 18 years) shall receive counselling and rehabilitation;
- Young mothers shall be encouraged to learn to look after their child in order to bond with the child as much as possible;
- New born babies must be allowed the benefit of breastfeeding as much as possible including exclusive breastfeeding for six months and introduction of complementary feeding at 6 months of age while continuing breastfeeding;
- Young mothers shall be encouraged to attend child welfare clinics (youth friendly) and ensure that babies are fully vaccinated.
- At the appropriate time the adolescent mothers may seek readmission into the same school or if they wish so join other schools.

The following practice shall be observed in the event of re-admission:

- Her parents/guardian shall be encouraged to make adequate arrangements for the care of the child at home while the young mother is in school. This is to avoid unnecessary interruptions to the teenage mother's studies.
- As far as possible, the teenage mother shall be allowed to join at the level where she left;
- The school administration shall make all efforts to treat the teenage mother like other students and not keep reminding her of her mistake. To all intents and purposes the school fraternity shall act as if nothing had happened to her;
- Teenage mothers in school shall not be allowed to form groupings e.g. of young mothers clubs.
- Counselling services shall be available to the teenage mothers including re-emphasis on life skills for avoidance of future unplanned pregnancies;
- Confidentiality and professionalism shall be adhered to in handling the teenage mother.

Source: National School Health Policy (2009: 23-24)

APPENDIX C: Letter of introduction

EUNICE WANJIKU KARIMI,

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO,

P.O.BOX 1161 BLINDERN,

0318 OSLO, NORWAY.

To whom it may concern,

DEAR SIR/MADAM,

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am a post graduate student at the University of Oslo pursuing a Masters' of Philosophy degree in Special Needs Education. I am conducting a research on activities and techniques that help child-mothers to cope with their life situations as learners as well as mothers. I have selected your institution as the site for research and would kindly request to obtain gatekeeper's permission in order to access the participants. I would also like you to provide me with some data about the participating girls under your care. I will ask consent from the participating girls as well as their parents.

If approval is granted, the talks will include individual and group talks about activities, which will be recorded.. The names of the participants, institution or other informants will remain anonymous and will be replaced by codes during report writing.

It is my hope that the talks will help the girls as well as other children in the same situation to feel better about their situations.

The data/results of the study will remain absolutely confidential and will only be used on report writing of thesis purpose. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me on the number and email address provided below.

Your approval to conduct this study will highly be appreciated.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours sincerely,

Eunice W. Karimi Contact: 0702565738 Email: mwangieunice60@yahoo.com

APPENDIX D: Consent to conduct research from NSD

Consent and permission to conduct research was received from the Norwegian Social Sciences Data Services through an email dated 21st August 2014. The consent was also registered as ref. 39206. This had followed their request for me to update the letter of information which I did. Attached here in is the email from NSD office

On Wednesday, September 10, 2014 11:25 AM Sondre Strandskog Arnesen

<sondre.arnesen@nsd.ulb.no> wrote:

Hi Eunice,

There is no need for a new letter from us as we are now satisfied With the Information

You witht Otgiuing your informants. Best of luck with your research

Kind Regards,

Sondre Strandskog Arnesen

Adviser

On Thursday, August 21 '2014 12 21 PM, Sondre Strandskog Arnesen

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Hi Eunice,

The revised letter of information now satifies all the requirements'

Good luck with Your Project!

Kind regards,

Sondre Strandskog Arnesen

Adviser

Sondre Strandskog Arnesen
To
mwangieunice60@yahoo.com
Aug 21, 2014
Hi Eunice,

The revised letter of information now satisfies all the requirements.

Good luck with your project!

Kind regards,
Sondre Strandskog Arnesen
Adviser

APPENDIX E (1): Interview Guide (In English)

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR YOUNG-MOTHER LEARNERS

Date and time begun----- Interview # -----

The following are some of the prompt questions for the talks with young girls who are mothers and have re-entered school after child birth.

1. Please, tell me a little about yourself (name, where you come from, age, class you are in....).
2. Please tell me something about your life.
3. Would you like to tell me what happened?
4. Were you still going to school?
5. What did you think about school?
6. Would you like to tell me anything about how it all happened?.(NB this may evoke some emotions depending on the circumstances and the researcher will exercise caution and observe any facial, body or other reactions).
7. How did you feel when you found out that you were pregnant and in school?
8. Would you like to tell me how your parents, partners and the school reacted, when they discovered you were expecting a baby?
9. What information did you have about sex education from school? (This question will depend with the class the girl was in when she became pregnant. NB The topic is taught in class six, science subject and develops upwards in subsequent classes up to class eight in the Kenya Primary schools' curriculum).
10. Tell me how you felt after seeing your baby.
11. Would you like to tell me about school now that you have gone back to school?

12. Who supported you to go back to school?

13. What are the challenges of being a mother and a learner at the same time?

14. What support do you get from home, school and community?

15. How are you coping with the challenges you have told me?

If you have any question, please feel free to ask me. (Give some time for questions, thoughts, reflections.....and answer them as best as you can).

Thank you very much for the information given and time spent for the talks.

APPENDIX E (2): Interview Guide (In Kiswahili)

MWONGOZO WA MASWALI KWA WANAFUNZI WENYE UMRI MDOGO AMBAO NI WAZAZI KATIKA SHULE

1. Tarehe na wakati----- Swali # -----
2. Naomba unielezee kuhusu wewe (jina lako, unatoka wapi, umri wako sasa na darasa unalolisoma....)
3. Naomba pia unielezee kuhusu maisha yako kwa ufupi.
4. Je, ungependa kunieleza ilikuwa vipi ukajipata u mja mzito?
5. Je, ulikuwa unasoma ulipogundua u mja mzito?
6. Ulihisi vipi kuhusu maisha ya shule?
7. Unaweza kunieleza vile ulipata uja uzito? (Hili swali linaweza likaimbusha hisia tofauti kulingana na jinsi mwanafunzi alipoupata uja uzito. Kwa hivyo kuwa makini unapouliza hili swali na utazame vile mwanafunzi anavyojieleza).
8. Ulihisi vipi ulipogundua u mja mzito ukiwa ungali mwanafunzi?
9. Naomba unielezee vipi wazazi wako, mwenye kukundunga mimba, walimu na wanafunzi shuleni na jamii kwa jumla walichukulia hili jambo la kuwa unatarajia mtoto.
10. Je ulikuwa unajua vile msichana anaweza pata uja uzito? (Swali hili litalingana na darasa lile mhojiwa alikuwa kwa sababu mambo ya mimba hufunzwa kwanzia darasa la sita katika somo la sayansi).
11. Je, ungependa kunieleza vile ulihisi ulipomuona mtoto wako baada ya kujifungua?
12. Unaweza kunieleza kuhusu maisha ya shule sasa vile umejiunga na shule tena?

13. Naomba unieleze ni nani alikuunga mkono ulipotaka kurundi shule. Unaweza kunieze changamoto zile unakumbana nazo kama mwanafunzi na kama mzazi ukiwa shule?
14. Je ni changamoto zipi unapata kama mwanafunzi na pia kama mzazi wa mtoto wako?
15. Je, unapata usaidizi wowote kutoka kwa jamii na jamaa ili kufaulu katika masomo yako?
16. Naomba unielezee vile unakambiliana na changa moto hizo umenieze za uzazi na pia kuwa mwanafunzi kwa wakati mmoja.

Iwapo una swali ungependa kuniuliza, tafadhali kuwa huru uniulize nami naitakujibu(Mpe mhojiwa muda wa kutafakari na kuuliza maswali, iwapo yapo).

Ahsante kwa maelezo uliyonieze na pia nakushuru kwa kunipa muda wako.

APPENDIX F: Participant information sheet

DATE.....

Good day, my names are Eunice Wanjiku Karimi, a Master's of Philosophy in Special Needs Education student at the University of Oslo. As part of my study requirements, I am exploring on activities that may help you and other girls who are both students and mothers to feel better about the situation.

I would like you and some of your friends to help me by talking with me on the activities that you do and may be suggest others that might work out for you. Your participation is entirely voluntary and refusal to participate will not be held against you.

The talks will last approximately 45 minutes and they will be recorded on tape.

The findings will be reported in form of a research report at the University of Oslo. A summary of the findings will be made available to you upon request.

All information gathered and data collected through the talks will be treated with confidentiality. Your names, the names of the school and the geographical location will remain anonymous.

The tape recordings will be erased after the report is written.

You may withdraw from the study anytime and you may refuse to answer any question that you feel uncomfortable answering.

If you agree to take part, I will have to inform your parents or guardian, as the law requires since you are still under the age of 18 years.

If you have any questions about the study or need further information, please feel free to contact me on tel. No. 0702565738

Yours sincerely

Eunice W. Karim

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY

I hereby consent to participate in the study. The purpose and procedures of the study have been explained to me. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may refuse to answer any particular question or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. I also understand that my names, the village and school names, responses and the talks will be treated with confidentiality.

Name of the participant..... Date.....

Signature.....

APPENDIX G: Parental consent form

Dear Parent/Guardian

My name is Eunice W. Karimi and I am currently a registered Master's of Philosophy student, at the Department of Special Needs Education at the University of Oslo (UIO), Norway.

I am conducting research on activities and techniques that can help child-mothers to cope with their life situation as students as well as mothers. I have selected mothers attending education in the local schools

The research will include individual and group talks on some of the activities that they do to help them cope with their situation. The aim is to explore and develop approaches and techniques that may help your daughter, as well as other girls in the same situation to feel better about their situation. It is my hope that this again will help your child to improve her studies and her role as a mother.

Full confidentiality will be maintained. Participant's names will not be used. The name of the school, village and geographical area will not be mentioned.

The experiences and findings will be reported in the form of a research report submitted to the University of Oslo. A summary of the experiences and findings will be available to you on request.

Most of the participants are underage and a parental consent is required. Therefore, I am asking your permission to allow me to talk with your daughter and allow her to participate in individual and group talks with me.

If you agree to allow your daughter to participate in this study kindly sign the attached slip confirming your consent.

If you have any question about the study or need further information, please feel free to contact me on 0702565738

After you have signed your consent please inform your daughter that you have agreed that she participate in my research

I, the parent or guardian ofhave read and understood the above information and give my daughter the permission to participate in the research study.

Signature (Parent/Guardian).....Date.....

Signed.....Signature (Researcher).....